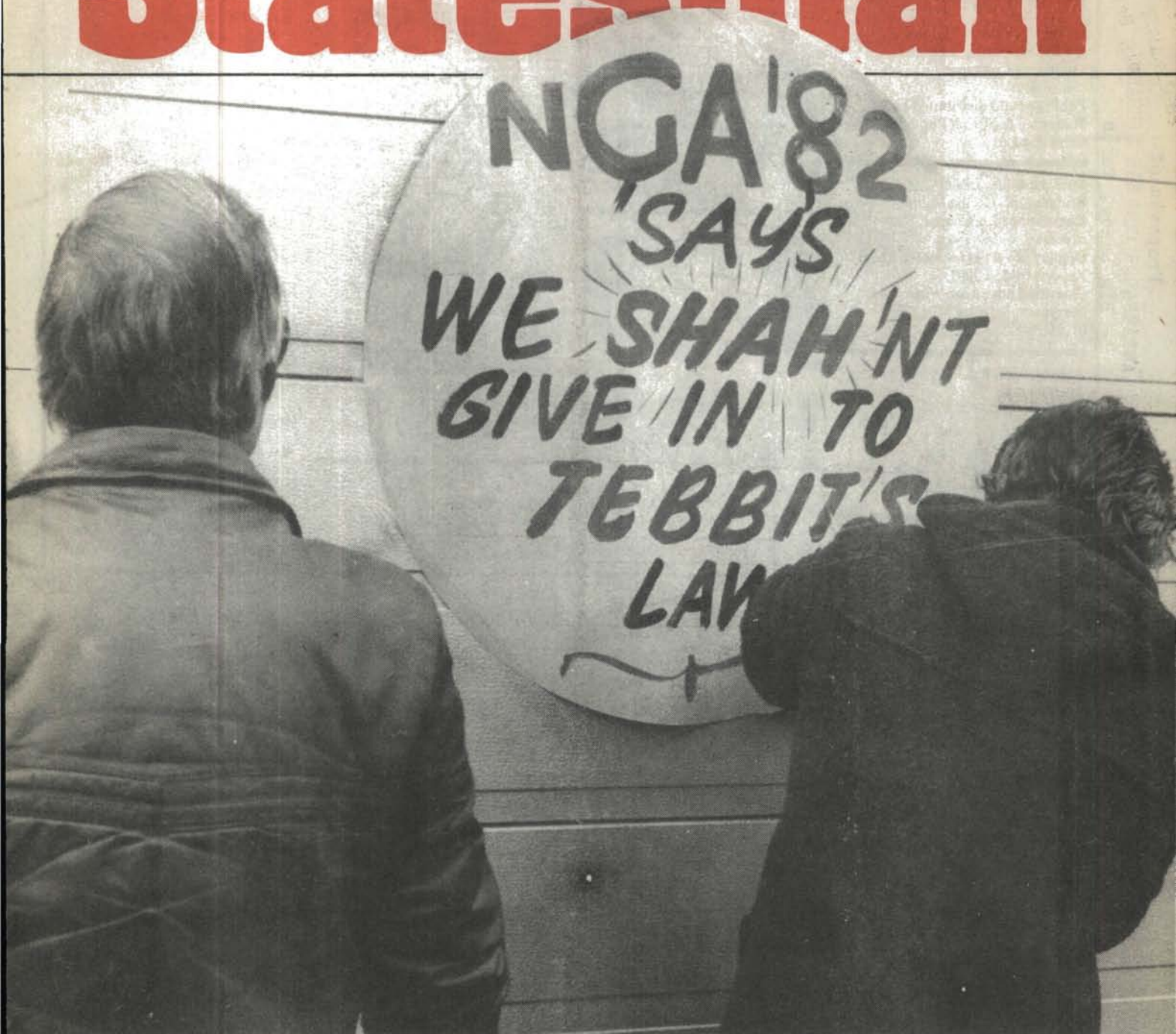


New Statesman

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Stop Press

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unions as the 1980 and 1982
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Unions, progress and the law

THE STAND by the National Graphical Association against the new 'employment' legislation is splitting the labour movement along familiar lines. The division is as much over the character and strategy of trade unions as over the question of when the law can be broken. All are agreed that most (though not every one) of the regulations make up a bad law in that its express purpose is to take power from plant-level union leadership and give employers an absolute right to manage: it is not to restore rights to individual members. All should agree – but it is part of the unresolved conflict in the labour movement that they won't – that insofar as individual members did lack rights, the unions themselves should have initiated the necessary reforms.

Although the disagreement appears to be over the issue of breaking the law, this problem would not exercise so many union leaders and Labour MPs if the law-breakers were not accompanied by thousands of angry pickets. There are very few people in this land who believe that all laws must be obeyed by everyone all the time. For example, the women at Greenham Common and thousands of other opponents of the nuclear arms race have received considerable sympathy. In 1981, when young people rioted in the inner-cities, there seemed little point in saying 'Oh, but you're breaking the law.' Rather, in these instances, it is the issues at stake that are debated.

What, then, are the issues at stake in the NGA dispute? For the most enthusiastic activists, the NGA is the long-awaited vanguard in the fight-back against the Tory government. It certainly fits a number of traditional socialist strategies in which a leading trade union 'takes on' an employer and, through this conflict, directly challenges the State. But the NGA does not offer an especially inspiring example for the rest of the labour movement. In this sense, it is profoundly different from Grunwick's, where an especially vulnerable group of workers – badly paid Asian women – were fighting to *enforce* the law on their right to join a union, against an employer who was being backed by a highly unpalatable right-wing pressure group. The NGA's character has come precisely from its exclusion of women (until quite recently, by rule) and any other group of workers who might dilute the skill or 'camaraderie' of the tradition. This form of craft solidarity, however inspiring to some on the Left, has throughout history militated against a wider class solidarity. Indeed, the militancy of the craft union has often been directed towards securing the dominance of their members over other workers in the same industry. The tradition of the union, which is fiercely defended, becomes hard to distinguish from a tradition of elitism and deep conservatism on everything from technological change to social relations. The purpose of the closed shop – the origin of this dispute – has thus often been to preserve this exclusive status (by controlling entry to the craft) in relation to other workers, rather than to uphold standards against an exploitative employer.

It is not surprising that those unions which are being taken to court – the National Union of Journalists, the Post Office Engineering Union, the NGA – to force them to accept the employers' wishes are all craft unions operating in industries

where the methods of production are changing rapidly. The role of the State, in the form of law courts, thus appears to be to push through both a new technology and new relationships between employers and workers – all in the employer's interests. The revelation this week that Sir John Donaldson, Master of the Rolls, has given his own confidential advice to this government will hardly convince unions of his impartiality. This is particularly so when it is now known that he favours the right of the employer in a dispute to make 'selective dismissals' – i.e. victimise activists, the point now at issue with Mr Eddie Shah.

There seem to be several conclusions to be drawn from this conflict. The first is that the NGA in Stockport, whom Mr Shah persistently misled, have a right to challenge the law, but they must accept the consequences; support for them will be limited because the core practice they want to defend is perceived by the wider movement as being far too exclusive. The second is that in order to get wider popular sympathy for their own interests, unions must do more to defend the rights of those who are not made strong by market forces or union tradition. For example, the 18-year-old girl typists spoken of so dismissively as the threat to the NGA's typesetting skills, would perhaps be less of a threat had any union made a priority of attracting them into a union, and negotiating over their abysmally low wages and vulnerable position. Thirdly, union Head Offices could put more of their resources into explaining what official policies on new technology will actually mean in practice. Most unions say officially that they are not against new technology, but want to participate in the decision of how it is introduced. In practice, this has often meant no more than negotiating a policy of compensation for those taking voluntary redundancy.

Fourthly, the TUC and the Labour Party should come to some much clearer understanding on what role the State *should* play in industrial relations in the foreseeable future. It is no point saying, as Eric Heffer did this week, that trade unions and the law should not mix. Trade unions have accepted that the State plays some role ever since they existed. Quite apart from the previous provision of legal immunities (are these to be restored?), every time a union supports a member taking an employer to court for unfair dismissal, every time it calls on the Health and Safety Executive to enforce safety conditions, every time it uses the law to raise low wages, the union is expecting the State to play a protective role. As changing technology and methods of production continue to cause upheaval in working relations, a growing number of union members will be subject to the exploitative or unjust practices of employers anxious to side-step union power. They will need the law on their side.

As a step within a socialist strategy of change, the Labour Party and unions could consider a 'social contract' in which laws and State powers be made to work for both the collective rights of unions as well as the rights of individual members. Of course, it will seem improbable that British courts should be on the side of the unions. But then the Labour Party should start agitating now for radical change in the tightest, most exclusive closed shop of all – the legal profession. □

How the police keep up with the Joneses

A LABOUR COUNCILLOR believes that he and his family have become the victims of police harassment, following remarks that he made at a council meeting more than a year ago. Last week, his 20-year-old son was convicted of assaulting a police officer and he now faces a further trial on similar charges.

Thomas Jones of Ystradgynlais in the Swansea Valley has been a Labour councillor for 15 years. Before retiring because of ill health, he was chairman of the NUM lodge committee at Treforgan colliery. In a council meeting last September, he was involved in getting the district council to write to the chief constable of Dyfed-Powys police complaining about the lack of action to prevent old age pensioners being terrorised by young vandals in their homes. The Jones family say that soon afterwards officers began following Peter Jones, their son, as he walked home late at night from his girlfriend's house. Most recently, police visited old people to whom Tom Jones had given coal, wrongly telling them that it had been stolen.

At the end of his trial at Ystradgynlais magistrates' court last week, Peter Jones was found guilty of assaulting a policeman, damaging a police cell and being drunk and disorderly on 12 February. His friend John Jones was found guilty of assaulting and obstructing another officer and of being drunk and disorderly. Peter Jones was fined £170 and ordered to pay £82 compensation for the damage, with costs of £230. John Jones was fined £140 and ordered to pay £230 costs. Neither had any previous convictions.



Peter Jones: dispute with police

Peter Jones was originally charged with causing actual bodily harm to the officer he was alleged to have assaulted. But this charge – which would have been heard before a jury – was dropped at an early stage.

The charges arose out of an incident on the night of Saturday 12 February when the two young men were in a group walking from a pub to the chip shop in Ystradgynlais. According to the prosecution case, members of the group shouted abuse at two police officers and Peter Jones deliberately broke two milk bottles in the road.

After a dispute between Peter Jones and one of the officers, a full-scale fight broke out involving about 30 youths who set on the two policemen. One officer suffered a broken nose and the other was injured on the head.

John Jones was arrested for assaulting and obstructing a policeman but was later charged *not* with that assault but with allegedly attacking the arresting officer, PC Jeffrey Williams.

Police evidence about the two men's alleged drunkenness proved shaky under cross-examination in the trial. Although PCs Jones and Morris gave detailed evidence that Peter Jones had deliberately kicked and smashed the milk bottles, they admitted that they did not have a

clear view of what happened. And both had altered their notebooks to read 'smashed milk bottles' instead of 'smashed a milk bottle'.

Peter Jones maintained that he broke one bottle, accidentally, and had offered to pick up the pieces of broken glass, if the officers would lend him a pair of gloves. He said PC Jones pushed him in the chest and that when he pushed the officer back, PC Jones struck him with his truncheon. In the station, he said he was thrown off a chair, kicked about the back and shoulders and dragged to a cell. There, he claimed, he was hit on the head by Detective Constable David Lewis. All the officers denied these allegations.

Peter Jones's parents were not told of his whereabouts until the Sunday morning, although his home is only 100 yards from the police station. Their formal complaint against the police, on the grounds of assault on their son, is still being investigated.

While waiting for his trial, Peter Jones was again arrested, this time in Llandovery where he had gone with a number of friends. He says he and Steven Evans were walking down the street when a policeman ordered them to get into his car.

During the night, they were taken considerable distances between police stations at Ammanford and Llanelli. In the morning they were charged with assaulting one of the officers in the car and being drunk and disorderly. The case is due to be heard on 14 December.

The family are so concerned at the attention they are receiving from the Ystradgynlais police that they are considering moving from the area. Barbara Jones, Peter's mother, said: 'I've always been very law-abiding and I taught Peter to respect the police. But now I'm as cynical as the rest of the family.'

James Stewart

Roving police unit in Newham

PLAINCLOTHES police officers who clashed with Asian youths in Newham last September were members of a District Support Unit – one of the special roving patrols brought in to replace the Instant Response Units – it has emerged at the trial of the 'Newham 8'.

Sergeant Alan Aylott, PC Robert Ferzer and PC Martin are all members of a District Support Unit. They have told the jury how, on 24 September last year, they were engaged in a plainclothes, anti-burglary patrol, driving an unmarked police car around the Canning Town area.

PC Ferzer intercepted a message that armed Asian youths were gathering on the corner of Jack Cornwell Street and Lawrence Avenue. He and his two fellow officers were the first to arrive on the scene.

PC Martin claims that he shouted: 'Police. You are under arrest.' At this point, defendant Kalbir Khela is said to have struck PC Martin on the head with a piece of wood. Order was only restored, it is claimed, after the arrival of uniformed police with dogs.

Lord Gifford QC, representing three of the defendants, suggested to Sergeant Aylott that the officers had been driving aimlessly around K District, intercepted the message, raced to the scene, jumped out, truncheons in hand, shouting 'Paki bastards' and 'fucking Pakis', charged into the group and began hitting them. Sergeant Aylott denied the suggestions.

Sigbhat Khadri, another defence lawyer, told the court of a pattern of incidents in the area, involving white youths from a vigilante group coming in cars with CB radio, shouting: 'Police Officers', and assaulting Asian children.

Colin Hart-Leverton, prosecuting, put it to Sergeant Aylott that the defence had suggested that the officers, being bored, had gone 'Paki bashing'. Sergeant Aylott said he was not a racist – some of his neighbours were Asians.

Inspector Roger Hoskins, a community liaison officer, told the jury that defendant Kalbir Khela was kept for over an hour before being sent for hospital treatment for a truncheon wound to his head. On examining the officers' notebooks, defence discovered that the use of truncheons had not been noted; nor had the time at which the officers came on duty, or at which they intercepted the message about the youths. Additions and corrections had been made to the notebooks and identification guidelines had been breached.

Zubaida Motala

Vote yes for the NHS

A NATIONAL HEALTH canvass, leading up to a mock 'health election', was called for by delegates to the Labour Party's national conference on the NHS in Birmingham last weekend.

The idea put forward was for door-to-door canvassing on the issue of the NHS to take place in conjunction with the local council elections in May and the European elections in June. Mock ballot boxes would be placed outside the polling booths in the Euro-elections for people to cast all-party votes in favour of the NHS.

Although Michael Meacher, Labour's new health spokesman,

seemed receptive to many of the new ideas which came up at the conference, there were few signs that the new party leadership was prepared to move beyond simply 'defending the health service'. Meacher advocated an aggressive strategy of challenging Tory appointments to health authorities in the courts – on the grounds that the cuts are not in the interests of good health care. But he did not challenge the undemocratic make-up of authorities.

Proposals actually to increase democratic accountability in the NHS seemed to fall on deaf ears, for example the call to local councils urging them to set up health committees to which their nominees on health authorities could report back. (Sheffield, Greenwich and

Nottingham councils already have such committees.)

Neil Kinnock, in a speech on Monday, accepted that Labour would have different priorities in rebuilding the NHS, but did not mention reforming the NHS structure.

As the new-look campaigning Labour Party gets its 'Save our health service' campaign under way, opposition to the cuts is stiffening. Gwynedd health authority voted this week to tell the government it is 'unable' to make the £1.4 million cut proposed for the financial year 1984/85. While at the All Saints Hospital in Chatham 50 cleaning staff, all women, are on indefinite strike over plans to privatise services.

John Rentoul

Tories refuse to pay for law and order

WHEN THE Thames Valley Police Authority refused last week to bear the growing cost of policing Greenham Common, not only did it burst the groaning dam of Conservative solidarity, but it exposed how the lack of democratic control had escalated those costs in the first place.

The absence of real accountability of local government, and especially of the police, meant that elected representatives (mostly Tory) had no control over police spending: £1.2 million in the year to 27 October and £1.8 million in the next four weeks.

First, central government has consistently ignored the local consequences of decisions about the base. When mandarins had Francis Pym casually announce in 1981 that Greenham would be a cruise missile base they omitted to tell him that in the local Structure Plan, agreed

with the Department of the Environment, it was classed as 'stand-by, for emergency use only'. Later they had Michael Heseltine ask what all the fuss was about, as Greenham had been a nuclear base since the 1950s, failing to mention that it had ceased to be so in 1964.

This indifference to local consequences included putting a pathetically inadequate fence around a key defence base, where a few snips with bolt-cutters can collapse 100ft of wire netting. Only in the last fortnight has a fence approved by security experts been erected, allowing substantial reductions in policing.

Secondly, the pathological hatred of the women by key Tories on Newbury District Council led to the refusal to consider a negotiated dissent area. Their latest triumph has been to change the bye-laws to make it an offence to light fires, just



Police at Greenham: cost £1.8 million last month

as the Chief Constable issued braziers against the bitter weather to the police.

The third failing is that elected members have no say in policing strategy, so the Chief Constable errs well on the safe side in his ground cover.

Trevor Brown

Trevor Brown is a Liberal member of the Thames Valley Police Authority.

● SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER is a 'Day of Reflection' at Greenham Common, with the theme 'turn the base inside out'. Women only are asked to turn up with mirrors to direct at the soldiers so that they can see themselves, and 'any tools which may be necessary'.

MISCELLANY

Not coordinated

Former Labour councillor Bob Lewis voted for Michael Meacher, Harriet Harman and Peter Hain in last week's elections to the executive committee of the Labour Coordinating Committee. Nothing remarkable in that, you might think - until you realise that in his last incarnation as a councillor in the London borough of Hillingdon, Lewis was an SDP supporter, having defected from Labour along with Hayes and Harlington MP Neville Sandelson. Lewis's flight from Labour did not deter the LCC, which continued to bombard the SDP man with leaflets and literature. Last month, even though he hadn't paid any subscriptions to the group for two and a half years, Lewis received a ballot paper for the executive elections. He thought it would be churlish to refuse this offer to take part in direct democracy, so he dutifully sent off his forms.

Red sales

If you thought the Confederation of British Industry was a hive of Tory-supporting capitalists, think again. Last month the CBI's West India Committee visited Cuba and, according to a letter just sent by the CBI to its members, 'the mission was extremely well received and met Senor Ricardo Cabrisas, the Minister of Foreign Trade. The members of the mission have agreed to debrief representatives of British industry on their visit as they are convinced that despite the difficulties facing Cuban industry at the moment there are considerable business opportunities both in



the short term and in the future'. As if that weren't enough, all CBI members have now received a letter from R. H. & M. Victuals Ltd: 'At the request of Miss A. M. Connings, International Affairs Directorate [of the CBI] we would like to draw your attention to one or two East European items we distribute that may not be readily available through your normal wine and spirit supplier'. These include Ukrainian vodka, Georgian brandy, Czech Pilsner and Crimean wine. The company is also offering Cuban rum at £88.90 for 12 bottles.

Sunday roast

The *Sunday Times* versus John Pilger, part three. By the middle of last week it was reported that the paper had received a pile of letters 'four inches thick. Masses and masses, with 98 per cent in favour of Pilger, 2 per cent against'. It was something of a surprise, then, to discover in a proof copy of the letters page of the strike-hit edition, which you will not see, two letters in support of Pilger and one against. One of the letters was from the Producer/Director of the Nica-

ragua programme and the *Sunday Times* was obliged to print it as a 'right of reply' piece. The other was from distinguished foreign correspondent Martha Gellhorn.

One letter which will never appear, for it has not been written, is from David Glencross, Head of Television at the IBA. Frank Barber's article in the *Sunday Times* misrepresented this organisation by stating that they had been taken by surprise by Pilger's documentaries at the last moment; in fact the IBA views these programmes well in advance. Barber also said that he had had a conversation with Glencross, something Glencross denies all knowledge of. When we rang the IBA to ask why no reply had been sent to the *Sunday Times* the only thing a 'very busy' David Glencross would say, through his secretary, was 'no comment'.

School's out

The new Tory MP for Amber Valley, Phillip Oppenheim (son of Sally), finally gave his maiden speech last week. Almost exactly a decade ago, in October 1973, young Oppenheim made an equally splendid speech, at the Harrow School Debating Society. He was proposing the motion 'That This House Supports the Abolition of Private Education'. According to *The Harrovian's* report at the time, Oppenheim claimed that 'the "liberty" upon which the private school system is based is a selfish thing, depriving others of freedom of opportunity. On a more down-to-earth level, wholly state education would lead to the breaking down of class barriers and, with the influx of ex-private school teachers, such

education would be varied and would quickly go from strength to strength'. Not quite in line with Tory policy.

Private enterprise

SCAT is a national community action group which celebrates its tenth anniversary this month. In March, it launched a bi-monthly magazine called *Public Service Action*, which has a circulation of 12,000 and has become an invaluable tool in the campaign against privatisation. So invaluable, in fact, that it now has a right-wing counterpart, *Public Service Review*. Launched at the Tory conference, this magazine has a remarkably similar format to *Public Service Action* - except that, naturally enough, its masthead is in blue rather than red. But who is behind *Public Service Review*? Its publisher, the 'Public Service Research Centre' in Watford, doesn't seem to have a telephone (presumably it's waiting for British Telecom to go private). Its main story was about proposals from the Adam Smith Institute, but the ASI says it has had no contact with the mag. The printers say that it was 'a one-off and a favour'. Design and printing costs alone must have been around £2,000 and there is no sign of a second issue.

The 'Academic Council' of the magazine includes the notorious Liverpool monetarist Professor Patrick Minford, Peter Kellner's old sparring partner. The magazine was given out free at the Tory conference and is now being sold for just 5p at the right-wing Alternative Bookshop in London. Market forces at work, perhaps?

Holocaust on television

THE DAY AFTER, the \$7.5 million American film about the period before and after a nuclear attack on the US, will reach British television screens late next Saturday night (10 December). But it will not be the last attempt at the subject. Production of a new BBC film on the effects of nuclear war has already begun, and filming will start early in 1984. The £275,000 BBC production follows up the highly acclaimed 1982 science programme *QED - A Guide to Armageddon*, which used imaginative special effects to illustrate the immense destructive power of thermonuclear weapons.

The Day After seems unlikely to bring a new anti-nuclear mood to Britain. The two-hour film centres on a few people living and working in Kansas, close to many of the US's underground ICBM silos. The film's most dramatic moment occurs when these missiles are fired

— and people in the vicinity, who had not then grasped the scale of the crisis and conflict in Europe, suddenly realise that their time on earth is almost over.

By European standards, *The Day After* is extremely tame in its depiction of the effects of nuclear attack on the survivors, and often loses its pace and tautness in order to incorporate lengthy dialogues between the principal characters. It may be that this heavy dose of traditional soap-opera form, familiar to the audiences of *Dallas* or *Coronation Street*, actually carries the message about the horror of nuclear weapons more effectively to that mass audience. *The Day After* received considerable hype in the United States which resulted in its huge audience there; and the same process is under way in Britain.

Last week, ABC showed the film four times to the press in Britain and other interested parties — but abruptly cancelled further showings to which MPs had been invited, probably as a result of the campaign by Mary Whitehouse against the film.

The new BRC film, *Threads*, is



A scene of devastation from *The Day After*

set in and around Sheffield, and has been written by local playwright Barry Hines (who wrote *Kes*). The theme of the film is to show how nuclear attack dissolves the threads that bind society together. Like *The Day After*, it follows a group of ordinary people through the weeks before and after a nuclear attack.

At the second of last week's showings of *The Day After*, journalists and reviewers were outnumbered 4-1 by civil servants from the Ministry of Defence, Foreign Office, Home Office, Cabinet Office, 10 Downing Street, and even the American Embassy. Official concern about the impact

of the film, although intensified by the current deployment of cruise missiles, is unlikely to extend so far as banning the film from British screens. But their presence was highly ironical, as it was the same government departments who secretly intervened 20 years ago to keep Peter Watkins's *War Game* off the BBC, driving its producer into exile in Sweden, and keeping the film forever off British television screens. Yet, as ABC finished showing *The Day After* last week, the chief Home Office representative was ready to comment that 'It wasn't as good as the *War Game*.'

Duncan Campbell

Northern Irish assembly totters

AS JAMES PRIOR fights to save his embattled assembly from collapse, the House of Commons will be debating Northern Ireland this Friday.

The Official Unionist Party, the largest party representing the Protestant community, walked out of Prior's assembly in the wake of the killings at Darkley Pentecostal Hall. In doing so, they joined the main Catholic parties, the SDLP and Provisional Sinn Féin, who boycotted the assembly from the start.

In the Commons on Friday, Ken Maginnis, the Official Unionist MP for Fermanagh South Tyrone, will be asking for administrative powers in such areas as education and the social services to be devolved to the assembly, if a majority of its members vote for it. In effect, this would mean a straight return to Unionist administration of the province. It would also go against the legislation setting up the assembly, which provided that powers could only be devolved with the support of a broad cross-section of the community — code for insisting on the consent of at least some Catholic elected representatives.

The implied threat is that, if the Unionists do not get some part of what they are asking for, they will continue with their boycott, making the assembly into an ever-shrinking talking shop with representatives from only the Alliance Party and Dr Paisley's Democratic Unionists.

The government will not give way to Maginnis's demands, but

Prior will be anxious to placate the Official Unionists in some way that will bring them back to the assembly. Ironically, the Secretary of State's greatest ally may be Ian Paisley. Since the assembly was set up, Paisley has been optimistic about the chances of getting some form of devolved government back in Belfast.

The Official Unionists have been deeply divided, with the party leader, James Molyneux, openly sceptical. Along with his colleague Enoch Powell, Molyneux would prefer to see Northern Ireland integrated into the United Kingdom and administered like Scotland and Wales.

By no means all of his party agrees with him. The desire for a return to a devolved administration, with all the promise of patronage that holds out, is still very strong at the grass roots. Now, Paisley is saying that the assembly embodies the last hope of any British government returning to local politicians power over Northern Ireland's affairs — and that, if it fails, it will be the fault of the Official Unionists.

Against that, feeling in the party is still running mutinously high over security in general and the Darkley Hall killings in particular. The Official Unionists are strongest in border areas, where Protestants have been desperately vulnerable to attacks from the IRA and other Republican groups. If the assembly has no power to deal with security, they argue, then it is pointless, from their point of view, and the sooner it goes the way of all previous British initiatives in Northern Ireland, the better for everybody.

Mary Holland

Liberals gain as SDP slides

LABOUR held its own against the Conservatives in local council by-elections held during November, but there are signs that both lost some ground to the Liberals.

Analysis is complicated by the fact that a clear majority of contests were held in Conservative territory: Conservatives defended 15 seats — often in areas where Liberals had come second in the past — while Labour defended only six. Voting figures for the 26 seats where three-cornered contests took place were:

Conservative	20,201	34.4%
Alliance	19,075	32.5%
Labour	18,149	30.9%
Others	1,223	2.1%

Making a rough adjustment for the imbalance in seats fought, I estimate national share of party support to be: Labour 36 per cent, Conservatives 33, Alliance 30. Compared with October the Alliance's share has increased, though more at the expense of the Conservatives than Labour.

However, the Alliance's recovery is an overwhelmingly Liberal phenomenon. (Two weeks ago we reported an SDP gain in Newcastle: the winner was in fact a Liberal.) In Walsall's Brownhills Ward an SDP councillor was elected in May 1982.

He resigned this autumn and the SDP, which seems to be falling apart in Walsall, could not field a candidate. A Liberal stood instead and came third. As far as we can tell this is the first SDP seat won in a 'main' May election — as opposed to a by-election — to be won back by a major party candidate.

Peter Kellner

27 October

Islington LBC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Islington LBC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
Barnet LBC	LAB GAIN (Con)
Waveney DC	CON GAIN (Ind)
Islington LBC	Lab hold
Maidstone BC	Lib hold
Bradford City	Lib hold
Hampshire CC	Con hold
Cumbria CC	Con hold

3 November

Kent CC	Lab hold
---------	----------

10 November

Richmond LBC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Newcastle-on-Tyne City	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Grampian Reg.	Lab hold
Newcastle-on-Tyne City	Lab hold

Richmond LBC	Lib hold
Chelmsford DC	Lib hold
Bucks CC	Con hold
Havering LBC	Con hold
Havering LBC	Con hold
Havering LBC	Con hold
Braintree DC	Con hold
Wycombe DC	Con hold
Chesterfield DC	Con hold
Berkshire CC	Con hold

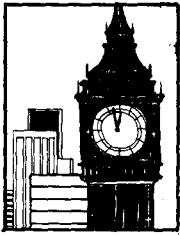
17 November

Walsall MBC	LAB GAIN (SDP)
Hampshire CC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Basildon DC	Lib hold
Isle of Wight CC	Lib hold
Ealing LBC	Con hold
Cleveland CC	Con hold
Windsor & Maidenhead DC	Con hold

24 November

Mid-Beds DC	LIB GAIN (Ind)
Enfield LBC	Lab hold
Chester DC	Lab hold
Hounslow LBC	Con hold

CC: County Council; DC: District Council; LBC: London Borough Council; City: City Council; MBC: Metropolitan Borough Council; Reg.: Regional Council (Scotland)



PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

A subversive's guide to this year's Reith lectures

SIR DOUGLAS WASS is intelligent, considerate and concerned. For nine years until his recent retirement he was Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. Despite the pummeling received by the economy during that time – 20 per cent plus inflation (twice), hurtful and unnecessary public spending cuts (twice), inadequate growth (continuously) and the IMF crisis of 1976 – he retains the air of a gentle academic rather than a failed mandarin.

But then, Sir Douglas would deny that he is a failed mandarin. It wasn't his fault that he reached the top of the Treasury just as the shocks from the first oil price leap reached Britain; or that Labour's 'social contract' with the unions in 1974 proved to be such a frail barrier against inflation; or that Mrs Thatcher has insisted on defying all known laws of economic gravity in pursuing her monetarist policies. Officials advise, ministers decide, officials execute. If politicians decide disastrously, don't blame Whitehall.

That is, admittedly, a slight caricature of Sir Douglas's position, but only slight. At present he is in the middle of his Reith Lectures on BBC Radio 4. He is getting a good press on the whole. There are just enough good lines in each lecture (e.g. that there's something in *Yes, Minister*), and just enough proposals for mild reform (e.g. bring back the Think Tank) to excite attention. And judged by the standards of most past mandarins he is relatively open.

But those are not the only, or even the most sensible, standards by which to judge Sir Douglas's lectures. Here is a man who worked at the heart of Britain's economic policy-making system for 24 years. He has unique experience of the lurches in policy from poor to disastrous and back to poor again. He has watched government after government fail to reverse Britain's decline – first relative, then absolute.

Does the Treasury bear some responsibility for this decline; if so, what can be done about it? Alternatively, is the Treasury, alone among Britain's major bureaucratic, financial and industrial organisations, quite blameless; and if so, what can all those other institutions learn from the infallible Treasury to correct their errors? So far Sir Douglas has offered no answers.

Instead we have been treated to a general romp round various ideas for reforming Whitehall. On the whole, by and large, taking one thing with another, Sir Douglas comes down against most of the ideas he discusses. Not on the basis of the proven success of existing arrangements but on the basis that this or that change has certain irreducible drawbacks.

For example, in his second lecture, Sir Douglas discussed the idea of having a powerful inner Cabinet, made up of non-departmental ministers, who would make strategic government decisions with each minister freed from the need to argue in his or her departmental interest. Sir Douglas set out the idea in classic mandarin style, briefly appearing to approve it ('a system like this has a lot of attractions') before proceeding to knock it down ('nevertheless there are powerful objections to it . . . Churchill himself was reluctant . . . I sympathise with this view . . . I have often discussed with my fellow civil servants . . . We have usually concluded . . . I am driven to the conclusion, reluctantly . . .'). Any young civil servant searching for the right prose style to obstruct reform could do no better than absorb Sir Douglas's style.

THAT IS NOT to say that Sir Douglas's lectures are wholly devoid of wit or punch. Last week he discussed, among other things, the phenomenon of ministers' special advisers: party appointees brought into a minister's office to work alongside career civil servants without becoming one of them. Sir Douglas humorously suggested that the system works well, and built up to the following punchline, made even funnier by his own deadpan style of delivery:

They can also help the politically neutral officials to appreciate the subtleties and details of party policy to which they may well have contributed when it was being worked out in opposition.

In reality, of course, senior civil servants consider the contents of election-winning manifestos to be mainly generalised claptrap; and usually rightly so. The idea that in 1974, say, Treasury officials listened with baited breath as Labour special advisers explained the social contract ('how subtle!') and planning agreements ('what detail!') is sheer fantasy.

Then there is Sir Douglas's revelation of a major Whitehall scandal. Recklessly disregarding the Official Secrets Act he said last week that a pernicious protection racket prevents ministers sacking permanent secretaries they don't get on with. Actually Sir Douglas put it slightly differently. He said:

The present conventions make it difficult for a minister to remove his permanent secretary, partly because of the desire of all concerned not to appear to be using appointments for the purpose of patronage, and partly because *there is rarely another post to which the permanent secretary can be*

moved (emphasis added).

A moment's thought should demonstrate the breathtaking magnitude of that revelation. Unsuccessful football managers are regularly sacked. No newspaper editor is safe from the wrath of an angry proprietor. Businessmen who invest their own money in plans that fail go bankrupt. Politicians, even rather good ones, who lose the support of their constituents lose their seats. Anyone who suggested that they should keep their jobs 'because there is rarely another post to which they can be moved' would face instant ridicule. We should thank Sir Douglas for bringing this Whitehall scandal to our attention.

SIR DOUGLAS makes a more substantial point when he contrasts the long-term view taken by some civil servants with the short-term view taken by most politicians. He cites as an example the arguments over the years about housing finance. By common consent the present array of subsidies, benefits and tax reliefs is a mess. It is expensive, inefficient, and makes the problem of homelessness worse rather than better. 'For many years', says Sir Douglas, 'officials in several departments have been concerned' about all this. 'But it has always been difficult to interest politicians in reform because of the slow rate of social pay-off compared with the short-term political costs of change.'

Yet amazingly Sir Douglas uses this point not to advocate change but to resist it. He wants to protect the notion of a permanent, politically neutral civil service, rather than copy the American system of filling the most senior civil service jobs with short-term political appointees.

As it happens, I think Sir Douglas is right to defend the idea of a permanent senior civil service (although there is a quite separate set of questions about *which* career civil servants reach the top). But it is manifestly insufficient to say that a poor system should not be made worse: the task is to make it better.

In so far as Sir Douglas paints a recognisable picture of Whitehall it is of a network of interlocking vetos, where different groups of politicians and officials have the capacity on all but rare occasions to prevent proposals they dislike from being agreed and implemented. It is a point that Mrs Thatcher appreciates better than most politicians; and fortunately even she has been prevented from forcing Whitehall to do everything she wants. It is a pity that none of today's officials are likely to step forward and claim the credit for their noble acts of obstruction. □

Courting disaster

For the first time, Tory policy on unions is having an effect in the courts and particular disputes. John McIlroy looks at why employers are increasingly keen to resort to the law

WHEN ONE hot day this July Eddie Shah, proprietor of the *Stockport Messenger*, glanced with increasing interest through a copy of the Department of Employment's Guide to the 1980 and 1982 Employment Acts his secretary had placed on his desk, he had little idea that he was about to secure his place in history. His impulse was, however, the same as that of many other employers. Shell workers at the Stanlow Refinery picketing the Haydock Distribution Terminal to halt deliveries; journalists on the West London Newspapers owned by television presenter, David Dimbleby, striking against the transfer of printing to the non-union firm of T. Bailey Forman; SOGAT '82 members refusing to handle magazines published by the British Printing and Communications Corporation in sympathy with colleagues in dispute over the closure of Robert Maxwell's Park Royal Factory – all have attracted successful legal action as their employers in the last few weeks have followed Eddie Shah's path to the courts.

His success – and that of Mercury Telecommunications in its action against the Post Office Engineering Union – has prompted speculation that we are finally witnessing the big breakthrough in British industrial relations. Conservative reformers have dreamed of for three decades. Secure in their growing belief that unions will accept legal judgements and tailor their industrial methods to the courts' prohibitions, British management is turning to the use – or the threat of – the law as an increasingly important tactical weapon in industrial disputes.

Employers are losing their fear that legal action will extend disputes and create soured industrial relations. They have been helped by the economic situation, the dexterity of Conservative strategy since 1979 and the inability of labour movement leaders to produce a realistic alternative. Mrs Thatcher certainly owes much to the exiled Jim Prior. His insistence that 'We have to recognise at the end of the day that the new legal framework set out in the Industrial Relations Act of 1971 was unable to command the general acceptance necessary to make it work', led to an emphasis accepted by his successor, Norman Tebbit, on two principles: legislation should be introduced step by step so that resistance could be tested out at each stage; and there should be no novel legal bodies such as the National Industrial Relations Court or compulsory structures such as registration which both focused union discontent over the 1971 legislation.

Unprecedented unemployment has not only weakened trade unions, it has also has-



John Smith (JFL)

Outside the Stockport Messenger: using the law as a tactical weapon

tened the switch in power from shop floor to union leaders and the greater control head office had already been given over shop stewards via the voluntary industrial relations reforms preached in the Donovan Report and reinforced by much of the last Labour government's legislation. The key ingredient in the Tory legislation is the 'Taff Vale' section in the 1982 Act. This opened unions' funds to legal seizure where the union failed to disown industrial action involving any of the numerous new illegalities – which banned nearly all effective industrial action – and was intended to exploit and intensify central control of the running of disputes.

THE TUC STRATEGY of rhetorical opposition never seemed likely to grow into action. The prospect of five years of Thatcher and a third round of legislation threatening shake-ups in the internal structures of the all-purpose unions and the possibility of the decimation of the political levy led to the victory of the new realism at the TUC Congress in September. The approach now was

to attempt to modify the legislation through discussion rather than to oppose it root and branch.

Yet even as delegates at Blackpool were voting in favour of resuming talks with Tebbit the NUJ were faced with the first injunction under the 1982 Act because its members were boycotting copy at the *Stockport Messenger*. The 17 September NUJ executive meeting was the forum for a model debate on many of the issues facing any union threatened by the law. The view that the union had to live up to its own conference decisions, that it had known exactly what it was getting into, that the job of the executive was to provide leadership, that any support from the TUC could only be expected if the union itself stood firm, won out over those who stressed the possible bankrupting of the organisation and the need to consult the members over such a grave threat. Even 'middle-of-the-roaders' such as General Secretary Ken Ashton supported breaking the law, arguing that irrespective of the TUC's stand the union could not let the NGA down.

Nonetheless, the impact of the TUC's new stance soon made itself felt. The POEU faced with action for an injunction by Mercury had already called off some of their boycott action which was successful but patently illegal. When the union asked for the TUC's advice on accepting the injunction, Len Murray made it clear that unions were not expected to break the law. The POEU began to feel its isolation. Its lawyers emphasised in a detailed memorandum the dangers of not complying with the court order and the undesirability of open confrontation. Influenced by this, by arguments that disobedience could prejudice the union's position at a full trial for damages and the fact that the union's rules require officials to operate within the law, five of the Broad Left majority on the POEU executive split off to give a 14-9 vote in favour of compliance.

IN TODAY'S circumstances it is impossible for any one union, no matter how powerful, to take on the government in isolation. Sympathetic law and compliant unions are an incitement to employers to take any opposition to court. Mercury claimed that it had lost orders worth between £500,000 and £1.5m a year and that a further £4m in orders and investments was jeopardized. What was particularly chilling for the unions was that Mercury, having achieved the ending of the action through the interim injunction, declared its intention to ask for damages at a full hearing, breaching an established convention amongst employers that matters were laid to rest after an injunction was granted.

The so-called Taff Vale clause has made all the difference. The confidence of the judiciary compared with a decade ago was summed up by Mr Justice Eastham in initially imposing the £50,000 fine on the NGA: 'If there are continued breaches of the injunction the time may well come when this union must be taught to obey the law by having all their assets sequestered'. Within days it had happened. □

TRADE UNIONS: 2

Rude awakening

Walter Pond reports on the background to the Stockport Messenger dispute

UNTIL THIS WEEK, it had appeared as though the 'New Realism' of the TUC had become the New Consensus for the whole movement. The mass picketing, defiance of the law by the National Graphical Association and sequestration of the NGA's funds has thus come as an unwelcome jolt to the TUC.

In fact, the TUC should not have been too surprised that the NGA had fallen out with its policy of accommodation. Earlier this year, the NGA showed its independence when it carried on its strike at the *Financial Times* in the face of threatened suspension from the TUC. Moreover, the union has long had a policy of refusing to recognise the Tories' employment laws. Although in 1972 the NGA did register – and had to resign from the TUC as a result – this was to avoid financial penalties that would have bankrupted their provident fund due to a peculiar tax avoidance agreement the union had established with the Inland Revenue.

The NGA, unlike more general unions, is peculiarly vulnerable to the 1980 and 1982 Employment Acts. Under the Acts, the closed shop is not outlawed, but coercive recruitment is, and compensation for those dismissed for refusing to join a union has been increased. The NGA and the print industry in general has one of the highest concentrations of closed-shop members, along with electricity, docks and the merchant navy. On top of that, the new ban on most 'secondary' industrial action flouts the NGA's rule 43 which forbids members to

accept from or pass material on to 'non-recognised sources.'

In adopting its stance of defying the law now, the NGA is arguing that it is following TUC policy agreed at the special Wembley Conference in 1982 and not altered by subsequent Congresses. At Wembley, the TUC agreed a statement which gave:

due warning to employers and the government that the use of the law to impose new and unjustified limitations on unions and to induce employers and others to attack union funds, could well have widespread repercussions. If there are such repercussions the responsibility will be fairly and squarely on the government which has initiated the legislation and those who seek to use its provisions to attack workers and their unions.

All employers, the statement continued, should realise that 'the movement will not stand idly by if a union in a weak position is attacked on an issue of importance to the movement generally.' The NGA, facing claims for damages and fines of millions of pounds, believes that it fulfils all these criteria for widespread support.

DESPITE ITS relative wealth, the NGA is in long-term decline. Technological change is forcing it on to the defensive. Most type is now 'set' by photo composition, which uses a typewriter-like keyboard, and not the much more complex hot metal system. Thus the craft status of the work is being fatally undercut, and with it goes the union's claim that it must control the supply of labour

Employers' fall-out

THE MOST dramatic effect of last weekend's two-day stoppage by the NGA was to split the 11 member employers' organisation, the Newspaper Publishers' Association (NPA), right down the middle.

Three publishers decided on Sunday night to take on the NGA and lock them out. Rupert Murdoch's News International, publisher of *The Times* and the *Sun*, Lord Matthews, publisher of the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Star*, and Mirror Group Newspapers, publisher of the *Daily Mirror* and *Sporting Life*, took a hard line and sacked their NGA employees.

The *Financial Times* (owned by multinational S. Pearson & Son plc) refused to join the hardliners and published as normal on Monday morning, along with the *Guardian*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Telegraph* and, rather incongruously, the licensed victuallers' paper the *Morning Advertiser*.

The split is the culmination of recent infighting among the Fleet Street proprietors, who have no common employers' strategy for survival. The *Financial Times* lost £10 million

in a ten-week dispute with the NGA this summer, in which it received no support from the rest of the NPA. The *FT* now has its revenge. It is also coping with the bitter inter-union dispute over the electricians' union (EETPU) press branch which wants to join SOGAT. The EETPU members had only just gone back to work after a walk-out when the NPA met to discuss locking out the NGA.

The *Mail*, published by Rothermere's Associated Newspapers, is currently engaged in a life-and-death circulation battle with the *Express*, and jumped at the chance to snatch some of its rival's circulation. Usually in Fleet Street disputes the unions and employers agree that papers not in dispute won't print extra copies to take advantage of a strike, but on this occasion the NGA shrewdly waived this rule. The *Mail* was therefore still printing extra copies at 7am on Monday, two hours after the presses usually shut down.

The *Guardian* also printed extra copies to take advantage of the absence of *The Times*, as did the *Daily Telegraph* (price 20p), engaged in a more direct and bitter circulation war with *The Times*, whose cover price is being kept at

20p by subsidies from the *Sun* and the *News of the World*. The *Telegraph* (with the *Sunday Telegraph*) also sees its own long-term solution to the 'problem' of Fleet Street print unions in terms of a move to new printing works, with new technology, in the Docklands enterprise zone, rather than in direct confrontation.

However, even the big three were not as solid as they seemed. Only Murdoch is really keen to have a go at the NGA. Lord Matthews was anyway unable to publish the *Express* and the *Star* on Monday because they use the same presses as the *London Standard*. All Fleet Street NGA members walked out on Friday lunchtime, leaving the *Standard* presses in the middle of the run, and unavailable for other papers.

Meanwhile the NPA's director, John Le Page, has been trying desperately to patch up these very public differences. He has stressed that even the five soft-liners are taking the NGA to court for damages, and are seeking an injunction restraining the NGA from disrupting production again over the *Stockport Messenger*.

John Rentoul

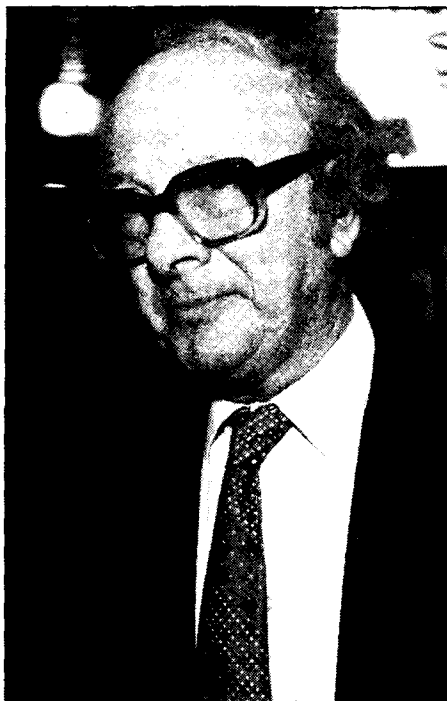
through the closed shop in order to maintain skills in the industry.

The technology is not acting on its own. The Newspaper Society, which is responsible for the provincial press, is beginning to take a more militant line. It wants to introduce direct input on to the page for advertising staff and journalists. The technology they want was on display in Brighton this week at the Newstec conference. Direct input or 'keystroking' has almost nothing to offer the NGA but loss of jobs.

In an attempt to get the NGA to agree to start local discussions on direct input, the Newspaper Society has launched Project Breakthrough; but the Society has also made it clear that it is prepared to break the NGA if there is no agreement. In June this year, Sir Richard Storey, the chairman of the Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers, told *The Times* that unless agreement was reached with the NGA within 18 months, then 15 regional newspapers were planning non-union editions. Some of the companies have already offered new life contracts to key staff guaranteeing that firms would not allow them to be victimised by the unions in the event of a settlement of the dispute.

One more development is particularly relevant to the NGA's dispute with the Messenger Group Newspapers — and that is the phenomenal growth of 'freesheets', giveaway newspapers entirely dependent on advertising income. At the end of August this year, 580 freesheets were listed in Benn's Press Directory, with a total distribution of over 24 million. This is more than twice the figure of local newspapers. A spokesman for Benn said that since publication of the directory, a further 30 free newspapers had been set up. In 1980 there were only 354. Between 1978 and 1982 advertising revenue for freesheets increased almost four times from £35m a year to £136m. For weekly newspapers' advertising revenue rose only from £150m to £196m. Freesheets' share of total media advertising had trebled — though it still only stood at 4.4 per cent.

The Messenger Newspaper Group is part of this burgeoning growth of freesheets. Ownership of these papers is often volatile, making it immensely difficult for the NGA to keep tabs on who is employed. Defeat by Messenger Group Newspapers might, the NGA fears, signal a collapse of the union's hold on the freesheet market.



NGA's Joe Wade: 'following TUC policy'

On top of these national threats, there are local tensions agitating the NGA. In August, the NGA was slightly stung when 13 journalists at the *Stockport Messenger* decided not to back their union executive's line that they should stay out in support of the NGA's closed shop claim, even if this meant that the National Union of Journalists were defying a High Court Injunction granted to prevent such secondary action. Mr Simon Haworth, the Father of the Stockport NUJ chapel, told the press that the journalists had proposed to return to normal working because it was clear that the NGA itself was not sufficiently serious about the dispute and was not doing enough to toughen up the picketing.

In response to these criticisms — which were also coming from local NGA members, the NGA National Council decided to intensify the picketing.

The second local factor is the relationship between the NGA and Mr Eddie Shah, the eloquent chairman of the Messenger Group. It could hardly be worse. The NGA insist that Mr Shah has reneged on a written promise to accept an NGA closed shop. It appears that due to a run-of-the-mill dispute with the Stockport typesetters, Mr Shah decided to go back on his promise to agree to a closed shop at his new Bury typesetters. Similarly he told the Manchester branch of the NGA that he would accept a closed shop at his new Warrington printworks, but then managed to make himself scarce whenever the NGA wished to finalise details. The Manchester NGA claim that, for instance, Mr Shah said he could not make one meeting because he was taking his wife to hospital, but, the NGA claim, Mr Shah was in fact seen at work all day.

The rights and wrongs of what happened through 1982 are obviously hard to disentangle from this distance, but it is clear that mutual trust has long since become a naked conflict over status and authority. □

POLITICS

A new realism

Wilfred Beckerman renews the argument for Labour to have an incomes policy

WHAT ARE SUPPOSED to be the basic objectives of socialists these days and how far is it true, as Mr Kinnock seems to have suggested recently, that a major revision is needed, either in the objectives or in their public presentation? For a long time, I suppose, most people would have accepted the view set out by Ian Little in *The Socialist Agenda* (edited by David Lipsey and Dick Leonard), to the effect that democratic socialism

is what Tony Crosland defined it to be in *The Future of Socialism*. It is a reformist movement towards a society of greater economic and social equality in which class distinctions will be greatly reduced . . . and poverty eliminated to the extent which is possible by means of social action. A high degree of liberty of the subject is also an end . . . Socialism is about equality, not ownership, he claimed. There is no Utopian blue-print, and the ends are deliberately fuzzy because the trade-offs between liberty, equality and efficiency are not explored to the point of defining desirable degrees of inequality and private ownership.

However, it has been argued recently that this view of socialism needs to be significantly changed in the light of subsequent developments. For example, Mr Kinnock stated ('My Socialism', *New Statesman* 7 October 1983), that 'Democratic Socialism, with its emphasis on planning to create wealth, is a *productionist* philosophy. But for decades we have allowed it to be presented and misrepresented as only *distributionist*. . . . Mr Kinnock rejects what he describes as the 'social democratic philosophy that the present economic system is capable of overcoming its own contradictions and of providing full employment and sustained growth'. He says that this view was 'at least plausible when it was first argued by Anthony Crosland in the 1950s . . . but this proved an illusion. He does not blame Tony Crosland, for whom he indicates great respect, for having been misled by 'temporary boom conditions of capitalism', but argues that 'the assumption of a civilised capitalism and a modulated Toryism formed the foundation stone of Crosland's whole substantial argument', with the implication that major revision is needed now that 'the whole theoretical edifice has collapsed in the face of a real underlying figure of five million unemployed . . .'

I do not believe that any basic revision in socialist objectives is required. What is perhaps necessary is a revision to the *means*

MADAME BLAVATSKY

Why were, and are, so many people, by way of books and articles, so concerned to besmirch her reputation, to prove her a fraud, and to denigrate her works? Is it because they are afraid? Does what she had to say undermine the "authority" of our highest institutions? Is "orthodoxy" fearful of the searchlight of her encyclopaedic knowledge and powerful intellect? Is it that academic vested interest must discredit her to maintain its own position? You can only find this out by reading her works for yourself. We suggest you would never be sorry if you did!

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as set out in Labour's last election campaign strategy, namely the failure to include a genuine and effective incomes policy. And this is only a revision if one ignores the past. The need for an effective incomes policy in order to avoid having to resort to the alternative of unemployment as a means of preserving price stability is, in fact, a long-standing ingredient of Labour policy. In the old debates of the 1950s between demand-pull and cost-push explanations of inflation, it was generally the Left that emphasised the cost-push explanation with its corollary that the required policies were incomes policies and not deflation.

The Labour Party has traditionally included proposals for some form of incomes policy – albeit unconvincing ones most of the time. But the whole issue was avoided in the latest election campaign in spite of growing reason to believe that the inflation issue had become a major public pre-occupation during the last decade – and is still ignored in Mr Kinnock's suggestions for revisions.

In the first place, it is misleading to maintain, as Mr Kinnock does, that the events of the last few years imply that the earlier emphasis on distribution rather than production was misplaced. Growth at a high level of employment, as Crosland frequently pointed out, is a *necessary condition* for achieving certain ultimate objectives, such as the eradication of absolute poverty, the reduction in inequalities in general, the weakening of subjective resentment at such inequalities as may persist and may be necessary, the preservation of personal dignity and personal freedom – not in a legalistic sense but in the sense of freedom to participate in society as a full and useful and valued member of that society, increased allocation of resources to the public sector, and various other top level objectives. Thus it is quite wrong to present 'productionism' and 'distributionism' as alternatives between which one has to choose and to maintain that the latter must be replaced by the former. The former is a necessary condition for the latter.

It is true – as he admitted himself in his Fabian Tract *A Social Democratic Britain* (1970) – that Crosland was too complacent in the 1950s and early 1960s about the extent to which capitalism would overcome its own contradictions. But at the time, apart from emphasising the prerequisite of full employment and economic growth there was not much point in inviting a bloody fratricidal battle over a conflict that remained – while capitalism was still working – merely hypothetical.

MR KINNOCK says that he disagreed with Crosland's assumption concerning the viability of the mixed economy over 20 years ago but not, he says, on account of his superior prescience. Instead he attributes his correct prediction of recent trends partly to Nye Bevan's *Why Trust the Tories?* and partly to his 'congenital suspicion of the upper-crust'. But in that case, although his prediction may have been correct the reason for it was quite wrong, and his failure to identify the correct reason is an obstacle to making the important changes in the

Labour programme that are really needed. For the stagflation of the last few years is due as much to the earlier acceleration of inflation, which, in turn, was partly or largely the result – however indirectly – of the failure of many dominant unions to play a more responsible role in the mixed economy as to the inhumanity or incompetence of the 'upper-crust'.

It was the increasing difficulty of reconciling full employment with price stability that was the real hidden obstacle, not the villainy of the upper-crust, as Crosland pointed out clearly in the early 1970s. In 1970, Crosland argued that, if deflation was unacceptable as an instrument for controlling prices, 'the only alternative – that is, if we really *want* sustained growth – is a price and incomes policy; and we had better face the fact. Would that it were not so!' It is here that different values come into play.

Conservatives, on the whole, are much more willing to accept mass unemployment than to accept accelerating inflation. Given their relative levels of income and wealth and their different positions in the relationships of production this is very understandable.

Labour is supposed to be the party that attached more priority to the interests of the working classes, who lose most by unemployment compared to inflation, as well as the party of greater compassion. So Labour ought to be the party most active in seeking an alternative to unemployment as a method of controlling inflation.

This is a simple example of where differences in basic values should lead to sharp distinctions between Labour and Conservative in the *means* of resolving the inflation/full employment conflict.

Mr Kinnock is surely misrepresenting 'social democracy' (i.e. the SDP) in accusing it of assuming that the mixed economy is capable of achieving full employment just

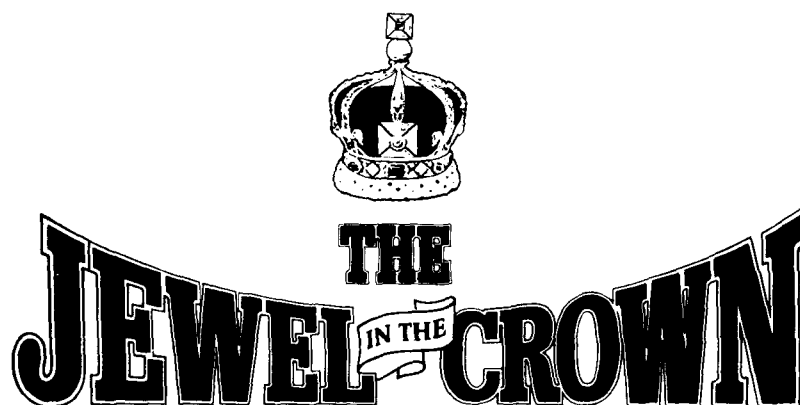
like that. On the contrary, by spelling out far more explicitly its commitment to an incomes policy the SDP recognises that full employment and price stability will not otherwise automatically be achieved. It is Mr Kinnock, by saying nothing about how his new over-riding productionist objective is to be achieved, who must be implicitly assuming that there are no special obstacles to be overcome.

THE ISSUE facing socialists, therefore, is perfectly clear. Full employment growth is needed for the pursuit of basic socialist objectives. This requires an incomes policy, which requires meaningful co-operation with the unions. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the only major difference between the SDP and Labour was that the former espoused a serious incomes policy whereas the latter did not. Socialists would then be faced with the choice between joining the SDP or continuing the fight inside the Labour Party for a change in the role of the unions.

Faced with this choice most socialists have preferred to stay on in the Labour Party for various reasons. For example, they may believe that the SDP is not really directed towards basic socialist objectives anyway.

Or they may have deep roots inside the labour movement which may take the form of a binding emotional attachment, or a long-standing mistrust of what appears to be a middle-class minority group. Alternatively, they may believe – as Austin Mitchell puts it in his brilliant book *The Case for Labour* – that the SDP is a party 'whose whole ethos is anti-union . . .' (From which Mitchell argues: 'Incomes policy without the goodwill of the unions is pie in the sky, which makes Labour the only party of effective incomes policy.')

However, many socialists who are not



motivated by this sort of objection to the switch to the SDP may still prefer to remain in the Labour Party either to engage in the fight to introduce an effective incomes policy into the Labour programme (amongst other things) or to rely on the fight being fought successfully by others. If this is their prime concern – rightly or wrongly – and if it becomes clear, as time goes by, that nothing will ever be done about the unions and incomes policy inside the Labour Party, then presumably they will eventually be under great pressure to reconsider their position.

Given the basic values of any political party the choice of means has to be continually adapted to changes in society and in economic circumstances, and to changes in the concerns and interests of the public as a whole.

This is what a small, but unfortunately powerful, element mainly on the more extreme left of the Labour Party has consistently failed to understand. It has been the great handicap of the Labour Party that, on the particular issue of the incomes policy, they have been able to ally themselves with almost all of the trade union movement, a movement which is dominated by particular sectional interests. The Labour Party's basic objectives are supposed to be concern with the conditions of life of the ordinary man and woman, many of whom are not only not trade unionists but are not even in the labour force. There is little point in, say, concentrating one's fire on how the wicked Tories treat the poor old pensioners or the long-term unemployed if Labour's programme is such that by the time Labour is in power all the present generation of pensioners will have died off and have been replaced by the unemployed.

Thus the ball is in the unions' court. It is impossible to prove how far, if at all, the resistance of British unions to technical innovation and increases in productivity in British industry has already damaged seriously the interests of the British working classes by reducing the full employment level of output per head in the economy as a whole well below what it might otherwise have been. But there is a stronger case for believing that the reason we are well below full employment is that it is the only way most Western governments are able to check inflation, and that this is partly, if indirectly, the responsibility of the trade unions. If the unions are unable, or unwilling, to permit the Labour Party to commit itself to effective incomes policies then it is the unions that will, however unwittingly and innocently, be the worst enemies of the British working classes and the chief obstacle to the pursuit of socialist objectives.

It is absurd to blame the Tories; they are merely pursuing what they perceive to be the interests of the rich. What is inexcusable is that for all its rhetoric of concern for the poor – most of it no doubt genuine – there is not much sign that the Labour Party is yet capable of seriously pursuing the interests of the ordinary working classes. □

Wilfred Beckerman is a Reader in Economics at Balliol College, Oxford.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Worse than prisoners

Tim Tate and Fiona Breslin expose the scandalous treatment of children in care

AN INVITATION to a small girl's birthday party stands proudly on the television in a tiny flat. For Gemma, five, it means an afternoon's entertainment; for her mother it symbolises the end of a nightmare. It is just three months since Carole, an intelligent, caring woman of 25, was officially allowed to 're-become' a mother. This is Gemma's first birthday at home.

Carole is one of thousands of women who lose first care and control of their children, then parental rights, then access – often for no better reason than poor housing or temporary illness. Her fight to regain her child – to whom she had done no wrong – typifies the problems facing parents over compulsory care orders. But the malaise in the over-extended State care system goes much deeper.

There are 96,900 children and young people in care in England and Wales, twice the number of adult criminal offenders in prison. Fewer than one sixth of those children have committed an offence or been before a juvenile court on their way into care. Yet the regulations and conditions that they face can be worse than for an adult prisoner. Among the abuses in practice in the variety of council, charity and commercial children's institutions are:

- The forcible injection of tranquilising drugs for control rather than medical reasons.
- The use of secure accommodation (lock-ups), apparently unchecked by the courts.
- The denial of access for parents and children to files held on them.
- The exclusion of parents and children from decisions about their futures.
- The censorship of letters and withholding of phone calls both as standard practice and for punishment.
- The denial of food and association as forms of punishment.
- The indefinite suspension of access for parents with no effective redress.

These abuses exist in a society that professes outrage at similar human rights violations in Soviet bloc or South American states. The evidence, backed by a welter of reports and enquiries, comes best from the victims of our caring institutions.

Carole's story: 'Gemma was taken into care when she was four months old. She was taken under a Place Of Safety order because I was having housing problems. At the time I was under the impression that this would only last a couple of weeks – I just needed a little bit of help until I got back on my feet. Unfortunately, I didn't get her back again.'



Sally & Richard Greenhill

Carole didn't get Gemma back thanks to a decision by Social Services to place the child with an established foster family. Initially, Carole was allowed frequent and free access. But, with weeks, access was reduced to once a month, always in the Social Services offices.

'I had to sit in a bare room; Gemma was put opposite me and, by this time, they had told her she wasn't to call me Mummy any more because that was very, very naughty – I wasn't her Mummy any more.'

In December 1980, a year after Gemma was fostered, Carole applied to have her returned. The magistrates' court refused the application because there had not been enough contact between mother and daughter. Access was subsequently reduced again, until, in August last year, all visits were suspended because they allegedly caused Gemma 'inward' distress.

In February this year, yet another magistrates' court hearing finally went in Carole's favour. Gemma was to be returned to her. Instead, she found herself threatened with arrest. 'Immediately after the hearing, Social Services applied to make Gemma a

ward of court. They came up to me as I was leaving the court and told me that if I went anywhere near her I would be arrested.'

It took Carole until May, five years from the initial care order, to win the final battle. An eight-day hearing before the High Court ordered all Social Services involvement to cease and damned their handling of the case. Gemma went home.

Janet's story: Four years ago, Janet said goodbye to her two-year-old son. Her common-law husband had been killed in a road smash, which left her, understandably, depressed. That was the sole reason given for a bizarre legal kidnapping.

'My son and I were walking across to the bus station when two social workers pulled up in a car and offered us a lift. I agreed and they drove straight round to the police station.'

Once there, a care order was produced – granted at a court hearing about which Janet had not been informed. She was separated from her son. After an initial period of free access, the boy was spirited away and Janet was refused information about him. Access was officially suspended to allow the boy to settle with his new family and, subsequently, not revived for fear of unsettling him.

'For three years I fought to see my son and, for the first time since he was moved, I'll see him in a few days. But if it goes wrong I might not be allowed to see him again.'

Even if all goes well she will be allowed to see her son just twice a year for a few hours. Janet, like Carole, had committed no offence, had never ill-treated the boy, and is now more severely depressed than before and heavily sedated every day.

Jayne's story: Jayne, an intelligent young woman, spent five years in a succession of homes and community schools. With her four sisters and brothers, she was taken into care – quite properly – when their alcoholic mother could no longer care. Unable to accept the 200-mile separation from her mother (which ruled out any access), she began the depressingly familiar pattern of running away, being brought back, and being punished.

'When they brought me back I was put in the secure unit. It was just like prison: it had two bedrooms which were cells really. There were big steel doors with a peephole in them; a concrete patch shaped like a bed with a mattress on it and a little potty for me to use when I was locked up at night.'

'The bathroom had a peephole in the door and I was watched while taking a bath. I was in the cell for a solid six-week period, during which I was locked up, had no schooling and was effectively in solitary confinement.' Jayne's punishment was not sanctioned by a court, or imposed with reference to any outside independent person.

But conditions for children *not* held in the secure unit were equally severe. 'All our letters in and out were censored by the staff, and our phone calls restricted to five minutes once a fortnight. Although we were supposed to have an independent visitor to "befriend" us, I never saw one in the whole

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time I was in care.'

Denise's story: 'I used to abscond from school, like everyone else. It was the thing to do. When I got brought back, if I acted up I would be injected with drugs like Valium or Largactil. I used to object, but I was sometimes handcuffed by the police while a doctor injected me. If you didn't agree to take their tablets you were threatened with the needle. At one stage I was given Largactil for a year, whether I acted up or not. In the end I got to need it, even though I got hallucinations and it flattened everything out in my mind.'

Denise is now out of care, and fresh out of prison – sentenced for petty shoplifting. The route to minor crime from care is a familiar one.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES these cases is not their uniqueness, but their depressing repetition throughout the care system. New legislation introduced in May forces local authorities to go before a magistrates' court if a child in their care is to be placed in a secure unit for more than 72 hours. But Madeleine Colvin, from the Children's Legal Centre, has been collating statistics on the effect of the new law.

'It was hoped that this legislation would produce a substantial decrease in the number of children in lock-ups. But our monitoring shows that the figures are as high as ever now – and, having been in court, it would seem that magistrates are granting local authority applications in almost 100 per cent of all cases.'

MIND, the National Association for Mental Health, has campaigned for several years to restrict the use of drugs on children in care. 'There's no doubt that major tranquilisers are being used just to control these kids,' says Ron Lacey. 'These drugs, Deprixol, Largactil, Lithium Carbonate, are intended for the treatment of major psychological disorders, but are being used on kids for their depressant side-effect. Some are being used in defiance of the makers' instructions that they should not be used on children.'

The DHSS has no code of practice on administering drugs to children and keeps no record of the type and quantity prescribed. Finally worried by the mass of case histories collected by campaigning groups, it did, however, announce last month that it would issue *non-legally-binding* guidelines.

Whether these will be followed or not, it will still be all but impossible for parents to discover. Social services files and case notes are rarely made available outside staff conferences (although police in at least one county are understood to have ready access to them). Nor are they likely to be made any more accessible by the forthcoming data protection bill which seems certain to exclude social services from its scope.

The secrecy inherent in care cases is, perhaps, most dangerous in the statutory six month 'reviews'. 'In many cases kids are either not told about these review conferences or only allowed in at the end,' says Carole Cox, chairperson of the National Association of Young People in Care (NAY-

PIC). 'The decisions made in them resolve kids' futures. Yet they are excluded from them.'

NAYPIC, like the Children's Legal Centre, is demanding a more stringent set of legal safeguards to protect children like Jayne and Denise. To date, DHSS response has been piecemeal compromise legislation. Its latest compromise is intended to protect mothers like Carole and Janet. From January, if a local authority intends to cut off a parent's access, it must apply for a court order. But indefinite suspension of access, which hit both Carole and Janet, will still not be covered.

Tony Newton, DHSS minister responsible for child care, at least accepts that the problems exist. Interviewed by Roger Cook as part of the Checkpoint investigation of the care system, he said that he was looking at means of increasing parents' access to social services files and was about to issue an access guidance code for parents wishing to see their children.

'There are many improvements that are needed. Too many children are in care for too long periods. But what I have to bear in mind is both the danger of infringing a parent's rights or natural justice and the Maria Colwell sort of case. That is the tightrope we are treading, and I hope that what we're doing will enable it to be trodden more successfully than has perhaps been possible in the past.'



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DIARY

David Edgar

As Salman Rushdie reminds us in his marvellous new novel (Booker, Schmooker; it's even better than *Midnight's Children*), the emotion of shame remains a potent force in human affairs. I am pleased to report that some of it has slammed up against the hitherto impervious Conservative group on Birmingham City Council. The matter is that of Councillor Graham Ling, who was one of three speakers in favour of the gruesome Harvey Proctor's anti-immigration motion at the Tory Conference in October. In essence, Ling's argument was that immigrants were ripping off the host community by such outrages as wanting their children to be taught their own language and wishing their dependants to join them in this country. A few days earlier, the Councillor (who is chairman of the City's Urban Renewal sub-committee) had told the *Birmingham Post* that Asians had far too many children (which made them difficult to rehouse), that they had this tiresome tendency to want to live near their places of worship (which compounded the difficulty) and that, in summary, 'far too much money is spent on these families, the more you do for these people the more they expect'. Following considerable protests from black and Asian community organisations (and, to its credit, the Labour Party), the Conservative group doubtless hoped that the furore would die down. It didn't, and so Councillor Ling has been removed from his sensitive chairmanship. He remains a councillor in a multi-racial ward, however, and claims the full support of his constituents for his unpleasant views. He should resign and put his theory to the test.

Shame Schame. One feels a certain amount of pride finally to have hit the news columns of *Private Eye*, even if only as a bit player in a particularly vicious and inaccurate attack on the secretary of the Theatre Writers' Union, an organisation of which I have had the honour to be a member since its inception. The TWU (you pronounce it owlishly) was founded in 1975 by a group of playwrights outraged by the parsimony of the subsidised theatre towards those who provide their primary product. The union has survived for seven years, pressurising here an Arts Council, negotiating there an agreement, without any of the usual paraphernalia of London offices, typists, switchboards, word-processors, or even full-time officials. (Contrary to the *Eye's* impression, our secretary receives the distinctly unhandsome stipend of £20 per week.) The reason that the organisation holds together is a system of direct democracy (at national and regional level) which spreads the boring and painstaking tasks sufficiently widely among the highly involved membership to obviate the need for a paid bureaucracy.

There are now moves to merge with the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, which I (as a believer in one union for all writers) enthusiastically support. But none of us will see the passing of this model of participatory collectivism (if pass it does), without more than a twinge of regret.

In London to strike terror into the hearts of theatre managements everywhere, I make hot-footed tracks to the Barbican to check out how my play *Maydays* is standing up to the rigours of repertoire performance. Despite two weeks off (for some unaccountable reason, the RSC is presently performing a lot of Shakespeare plays as well), the show is in remarkably good nick, a view apparently shared by the Leader of the Opposition, who is present, and is kind enough to congratulate the cast afterwards. The play opened in late October, and every journey back is a sentimental one, reminding me of the delights of the rehearsal period. Most writers, contrary to popular superstition, are gregarious souls, and, like dogs, uncritically delighted by human company (we nuzzle up to rent collectors and lick burglars). To spend six weeks in the company of flesh and blood actors (as opposed to my usual lonely lunch with a cheese sandwich and Sir Robin Day) is a great delight of itself and, when they are as committed, enthusiastic and talented as this lot, it is a positive inducement to get down to the next one, so I can be back in the rehearsal room as quickly as possible.

ROGER WODDIS

Favouring the French

The National Union of Teachers claims that too much French is being taught in schools while other languages are being ignored.

When Justin Hartley-Brett was young,
And set to learn a foreign tongue,
His parents thought the best would be
The language of diplomacy,
For there'd be vital work to do
Once he had learnt to parley-voo.

Thus was he taught, and naught could
quench

His growing thirst for all things French,
A trait which stood him in good stead
When, as a Foreign Office head,
He pleased the French, when introduced,
By kissing cheeks and quoting Proust.

He ate French food and aped their style,
Indeed, was such a Francophile,
That if by chance a *crêpe Suzette*
Was cooked before him, Hartley-Brett
In Gallic accents would exclaim:
'Lo! The postilion is aflame!'

Alas, the flawless French he spoke
Did less to save the world from smoke
Than if he'd known the Russian for
'I quite agree - make love, not war.'



There is an unwritten protocol that playwrights do not reply in print to the reviews (and mighty sniffy and huffy the critics get when this rule is broken). I have always followed this proscription to the letter (at least at the time), but non-critics are, in my view, fair game, which is why I replied to Peter Jenkins's extraordinarily bilious and spiteful attack on my play (and, indeed, me) in his political column in the *Guardian*. The burden of his argument was that the large group of people who came of age in the late '60s (from whom many of my characters are drawn) contributed little or nothing to political change in Britain, then or since, and his fervour on this topic confirmed my long-held opinion that the SDP has to be understood as a generational phenomenon. Statistics tell us that the age range of the SDP 'clusters' around the age of 40, to an extent unmatched in the population as a whole, which means that the archetypal founder-member will have been 20 in 1961, too young to have been traumatised by Suez and Hungary, but too old to have participated in all that peace, love and rock 'n' roll stuff which made the end of the decade so blissful to be young in. No wonder they are so bitter and twisted: they walked into adulthood hand-in-hand with Johnny Tillitson and Bobby Vee: they were past it even before the Beatles cut *Love Me Do*.

Earlier on, I tried to slip in the fact that I live outside London as if it was the most natural thing in the world (which, for 85 per cent of the British population, of course, it is). One of the many delights of provincial life is having to travel to London on railway trains, which, over last summer, took well over twice the advertised time to reach their destination on at least two occasions on which I was on them. The delight is contained not in memories of sitting in sidings near Nuneaton, but in the fact that, on the second of these occasions, I demanded my money back, on the grounds that the purpose of my journey had long since passed by the time we reached Euston. And, stap me, they paid up.

By their own hand

John Aveyard reports on the long-term political implications of the fighting within the Palestine Liberation Organisation

Tripoli

THE FULL HORRORS of modern urban warfare had, until recently, by-passed Tripoli, the most beautiful of Lebanon's coastal cities. Now, it has finally been caught up by the nightmares of Tyre, Sidon and Beirut. Its inexperienced inhabitants have been living through the familiar litany of random shelling, short-lived ceasefires, falling masonry, flying glass, screaming ambulances, endless blackouts and lives spent huddled in overcrowded basements waiting for breaks in the fighting to stock up on food and water, or to escape. Over 200,000 have left the city to cram into every available building in surrounding towns and villages. Over 1,000 people have been killed; many more have been injured.

The latest intra-Palestinian war has led to an exceptional degree of cynicism and despair among the inhabitants of Tripoli. More than most other Lebanese, they had retained some common cause with the Palestinians, who, as well as destroying each other, have been destroying their city. The fratricidal strife has done more to set back this cause than the Israelis achieved in their war against the PLO last summer.

It is unlikely that the Tripoli fighting has run its course, despite the truce agreement drawn up by Syria and Saudi Arabia. As always in Lebanon, the warfare has been too closely tied in with other conflicts for easy solutions to the fighting. It is the local conflicts that continue to convince most of Tripoli's citizens that their ordeal is far from over.

Driving into Tripoli on the road from Beirut, you leave the last Syrian checkpoint and speed down a wide avenue before slowing to negotiate enormous earthworks thrown up as the city's southern defences. At the roundabout which marks the entry to the city itself, a huge green flag on a makeshift pole bears the Koranic inscription 'There is no God but God.' To the right, in a heavily sandbagged, unfinished multi-storey building, Moslem fundamentalist militiamen nervously stand guard. For nearly a year, they have ruled Tripoli – the most prolonged exercise of political power achieved by fundamentalists in the entire Arab world.

The roots of the fundamentalist success lie in the social upheavals of ten years ago, which culminated in the civil war of 1975-'76. A wide range of Arab nationalists, leftists and street-corner leaders mobilised against the corrupt politics and glaring injustices of Lebanese society. In those days, the Syrians, champions of Arab nationalism,

were natural allies. The Lebanese national movement would have won the civil war, but for the volte-face of the Syrian regime, which intervened on the side of the Lebanese Right to forestall a revolution that they believed they would not survive.

The civil war was neither won nor lost, but the street-corner politicians remained in business. Khalil Akkawi gradually became a dominant populist leader among the Sunni Moslem population of Tripoli. His following came from the workers and petty traders of the old city. To start with, he was a member of Fatah, Arafat's wing of the PLO. Increasingly, he and his followers turned to a purist version of Islam – the fundamentalist appeal is not just sectarian, but, in itself, a protest against corruption and injustice and what was seen as the moral bankruptcy of the traditional politicians.

Akkawi's movement proved a considerable thorn in the Syrians' side, as they took control of north Lebanon after the war – increasingly, the fundamentalists claimed for themselves the right to run their own city of Tripoli. Fundamentalists were a particular threat to the Syrians: the strongest opposition to the regime in Damascus comes from the Moslem Brotherhood, which has been suppressed with extraordinary brutality. In Tripoli, tensions between the fundamentalists and rival Syrian-backed militias increased sharply after the war last summer. Arafat's support for the fundamentalists – part of his constant search for local allies – ensured their victory, but provoked the fury of the Syrians. It is this victory which mili-

tates against any lasting settlement of the recent fighting. Those fundamentalists who have thrown their weight behind Arafat have, unlike him, no real escape route and even more to fear from the Syrians and their local protégés if these take back control of the city.

THESE LOCAL political tensions provide a further stumbling block to the settlement of the central dispute between the Palestinians themselves. The conflict is more about tactics than ideology or personalities – though both the charisma and the corruption sticking to Yasser Arafat add fuel to the flames. The extraordinary lengths to which both sides have gone shows the desperation of men driven by the almost unending horrors of war, massacre and defeat. Much of their bitterness dates back to the events of last September, when Arafat's negotiated retreat from Beirut was followed by the Sabra and Chatila massacres. The dissidents still blame him for this decision, and for his continuing readiness to negotiate with Jordanians, Americans and the Israelis themselves.

The dissidents believe that their only option is a continued and unrelenting armed struggle against Israel. They see this as the only pressure which will ever generate a significant response. They have not been risking their lives out of any desire to please the Syrians – on the contrary, they can have few illusions about their current allies. Like the Jordanian and Lebanese governments before them, the Syrians are acutely aware of the destabilising effect of the PLO on their regime – especially a PLO committed to unending guerrilla warfare. The dissidents' alliance with the Syrians, like Arafat's with the fundamentalists, is purely pragmatic. Neither alliance has much of a future.

Arafat's readiness to negotiate has led to few obvious dividends. The dissidents are right to believe that he would consider the Reagan plan, and equally right in believing that he could not get it implemented. The plan calls for a federation of Jordan and the West Bank, under King Hussein, and in-



cludes an ill-defined Palestinian authority. It has been rejected out of hand by the Israelis, who are perfectly unambiguous about their intention to hold on to the West Bank for ever.

Continued armed struggle seems even less likely to succeed in significantly denting Israeli intransigence – still less in the ultimate overthrow of the Israeli state, which many dissident Palestinians still believe feasible. The continuing inability of much of the PLO to recognise that the Israelis are there to stay plays into the hands of Israeli expansionists. The Palestinians under Israeli occupation and in Israel itself have come to realise this – almost all support Arafat and his willingness to negotiate.

The Israeli government has scarcely bothered to conceal its satisfaction with the bloodletting in Tripoli. Militant Zionists have long had a vested interest in a PLO which reduces international pressure on themselves, without, at the same time, itself constituting a serious threat. Exactly what kind of PLO is useful to them is difficult to know. A discredited Arafat may be ideal – less of a direct threat than more militant alternatives, but enough of a bogeyman to persuade Western politicians that he should still be excluded. The exchange of prisoners was probably a boost to Arafat and certainly a carefully calculated political move. It was scarcely just an effort to save six prisoners' lives, which were not, anyway, seriously threatened. As an Israeli officer in south Lebanon commented, many more Israelis would lose their lives at the hands of those

released, who return to the guerrilla fight. The freed men reflect the PLO divisions in their attitudes to Arafat, and both sides to the Tripoli conflict can expect new recruits. The real winners are the Israelis, as the apparently senseless violence reinforces the international image of the 'heartless' Palestinian – which the still more violent Israeli campaign in Lebanon had done so much to diminish.

The problem confronting Palestinian nationalists can be seen in south Lebanon, where the Israelis are inexorably tightening the grip of their occupation. Restrictions have been introduced on vehicles travelling across the Awali River – the northern

boundary of the occupied zone. Fears of permanent occupation are spawning a growing civil resistance movement. Attacks on Israeli troops grow almost daily. Public opinion in Israel is increasingly turning against the occupation.

But none of this provides insuperable obstacles for Israelis who wish to prolong the occupation indefinitely, provided Israel can continue to draw on the current degree of support it gets from America and the West. Discrediting the Palestinians is essential to the whole process. This is easier still when the Palestinians discredit themselves. The graveyards of Tripoli bring the aims of those now ruling Israel very much closer. □

ARMS CONTROL

Triumph of bad faith

Duncan Campbell analyses the breakdown of the Geneva arms talks and predicts no early resumption

THE SOVIET WALKOUT from the Geneva talks on limiting 'intermediate nuclear forces' (INF) is a qualified triumph for the West's nuclear hawks. It is a triumph from which only they can draw comfort.

The Soviet Union representatives now have nothing to gain from an early return to Geneva, despite the comments of some western politicians. Symbolically, they left the exact time of their departure to the moment when the most important new factor, as they saw it, had entered into the situation – the arrival of Pershing II missiles in Germany, rather than the cruise missiles' emplacement at Greenham Common. From the beginning, the Soviet negotiators in Geneva have only been interested in their version of the 'zero option', which involves no new medium range missiles for NATO.

While the Soviets were offering to reduce their SS-20 stockpile to achieve a balance of sorts with existing western forces, they were clearly much more interested in distinguishing between zero and 100 new NATO missiles than between 100, 200, or any other number. Since fewer than half of the 572 planned new NATO missiles will go into operation between now and the end of 1984, the Soviets have a considerable breathing space before deciding that a return to the negotiating table may be worthwhile.

The arrival of cruise and Pershing, and the Soviet response, is a triumph for the hawks because, despite the dramatic change of mood in western Europe between December 1979 (when NATO ministers decided to deploy cruise and Pershing missiles) and December 1983, the decision has been put into effect on time – regardless of Soviet anguish and diplomatic pressure, political vacillation in many of the countries concerned and the protests of peace movements.

It is a qualified triumph because the prime actual objective of the new missiles –

the 'coupling' of European defence to the American nuclear arsenal and the demonstration of NATO solidarity (*not* 'countering' the SS-20s) – has only been obtained at a high and, possibly, ultimately destructive cost. The SPD in Germany and the Labour Party here are now firmly against retaining the new missiles; they will not be out of office for ever. Public and government acceptance of cruise missiles in Belgium and the Netherlands still hinges to some extent on progress in arms control negotiations, which has not happened – the US has not been seen to be negotiating in good faith.

There are potentially four further years in which the new NATO missiles can be debated, the arms balance discussed and agreement on reduced deployment totals reached. At the end of this month there will be only 16 missiles at Greenham Common. Not until

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the end of 1984 will the full complement of cruise missiles be in operation at the two initial cruise bases, Greenham and Comiso in Sicily.

Four further cruise bases are to come into operation between now and the end of 1987: in West Germany (probably Wunschein), then Belgium (Florennes), the Netherlands (Woensdrecht) and a second base in Britain (Molesworth). The Soviets' next best opportunity to intervene and rejoin negotiations will be before deployment can begin in Belgium and the Netherlands. That is not planned for at least two years.

Meanwhile, the Soviets may well use the interlude to underscore the risks of further extending the arms race. This will not be pleasant for those Europeans caught between the co-belligerents. The Soviet Union may well mean business when it threatens an accelerated deployment of shorter range nuclear missiles in Europe, but it cannot expect NATO governments to be more amenable to negotiation under intimidation (and the threat of new weapons) than they themselves were.

In retrospect, it is remarkable that the US was so successful in Geneva in winning concessions from the Soviet Union. Their offer to dismantle a substantial number of the modern SS20 missiles was unprecedented and a surprising index of quite how much discomfort the new NATO missiles have caused to Soviet leaders.

But the US had no real intention of shaking hands on any deal. Ironically, had the

Soviet Union yielded and accepted the Reagan 'zero option' (the dismantlement of all their medium range missiles), NATO's primary objective in deploying the new missiles – 'coupling' Europe to the American strategic nuclear force – would have been lost.

If the US zero option had been accepted, Europe would continue to be threatened by a wide range of other Warsaw Pact forces, but would, according to fashionable NATO nuclear theory, nonetheless be 'decoupled' from the US. As early as 1977, the then Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Haig, warned NATO that the SS20s were the lesser part of the Soviet forces' nuclear threat to Europe. The Soviet theatre

air threat is even more fundamental than that of the SS20s.

The zero option could not have been tabled had there been any serious prospect of its being accepted by the Soviet side. The Soviet delegation, therefore, has little to gain by returning to Geneva for some considerable time. It does have a lot to gain by diplomatic manoeuvres during 1984, if they can beneficially influence the result of the next US presidential election. In the long term, the only arms control agreement now feasible will involve only slight reductions in cruise and Pershing totals. More radical surgery at Greenham Common may have to wait until the end of the decade – if we have that long. □

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed. (On postcards, please.)

□ Apple trees treated with radioactive gamma rays have been developed by agricultural scientists at Long Ashton research station near Bristol to fight the French Golden Delicious challenge. The mutant Cox's Orange Pippins will be perfectly safe to eat – including the radioactive core. – *Daily Telegraph* (Ian Lobo)

□ Mrs Hockham added that her husband was not frightened of animals. 'In fact, he's very fond of them. We used to have two goldfish,' she said. – *Portsmouth News* (John E. Arnold)

□ Amazon explorer Benedict Allen, forced to eat his dog to survive in the jungle, has been interviewed by the RSPCA. Officials are drawing up a report to allay fears that 23-year-old Mr Allen is planning a repeat performance with a British dog. – *Daily Mail* (D. C. Boulton)

□ Sting's British accent has lost him the part of Christ in America's latest blockbusting film, but gained him Pontius Pilate since, say the movie-makers, 'Pilate was a foreigner so it's OK for him to sound different'. – *Daily Express* (George Moor)

□ Ripponden parish councillor Duncan Taylor, who other councillors have accused of embarrassing behaviour at the parish civic dinner, has refused to resign. Councillor Taylor did not attend the dinner but called in later wearing a sweater and slacks. Everyone else was in evening dress. He said he had been doing a late night drinkingsurvey in Ripponden and had called in to tell parish council chairman Coun Gordon Midgley his findings. – *Halifax Courier* (David Chaytor)

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ITALY

After the missiles

**Ben Thompson on cruise and
the Italian peace movement**

WITH THE CRAXI government's comfortable majority on 16 December and the arrival last Sunday of the first cruise missiles in Sigonella, the missile base at Comiso now looks like a *fait accompli*. The missiles will be stored at Sigonella until the Comiso base is ready to receive them next spring, although the first TELs (launch vehicles) arrived at Comiso direct from Frankfurt in early October.

The base itself is now well fortified and guarded and the first contingent of Americans has arrived. Hand picked and given a crash course in How Not to Fall Out With a Sicilian (don't mention the Pope or the mafia and don't wear your uniform in town), they have so far been given a moderate-to-warm reception by the Comisani. It is expected that there will be 300 of them by the end of the year.

With the dissolution of the IMAC (International Meeting Against Cruise) camp on 30 September, the local peace movement is now suffering a winding-down of its activities. Local activists are experiencing a frustrating sense of isolation as the population begins to accommodate itself to the idea of a long-term American presence.

It's been a hard and disappointing summer in Comiso. The first disappointment was the defection to the socialist party of a Communist councillor, after two months of stalemate during which the previous pro-missile Socialist mayor, Salvatore Catalano, was unable to get himself re-elected. On 8 September, Paolo Peri, president of a local shopkeeper's union, turned up at the town hall accompanied by a score or so of known convicted criminals. He was also accompanied by the *questore* (police chief) Borgese, of Ragusa, under whose law-abiding gaze he left the Communist benches to cast a decisive vote in favour of the re-election of Signor Catalano. It's common knowledge in Comiso that almost all the Communist councillors had been offered large sums of money to change sides, but there may have been other pressures brought to bear on Peri, who was forced out of the transport business several years ago when his lorry was burned out by the mafia.

The second tribulation was the brutal and unprovoked police violence which took place on 8 August, when demonstrators were beaten with wooden baton handles and metal bullet boxes and pursued for miles along the roads around the base and even into the IMAC camp itself. The press agencies accepted the fiction that *autonomia*

members had thrown stones at the police.

What seems to have given the impulse to this fiction was the fact that, at another demonstration, in Vicenza on 9 April, stones were thrown in to a military base and that, the day after, there was an explosion at an arms store in the area. A group calling itself 'Proletaria Territoriale' then published an article claiming that this action was the first use of 'minimum illegality' by the mass – which is why the bombing came to be blamed on the peace movement. In fact, according to every eye-witness account, the *autonomia* group from IMAC had kept its promise to the peace camp and offered no violence on 8 August.

The police charges masterminded by *questore* Borgese on 25 September, although less violent and conducted within the guidelines of the law, were again justified with the explanation that an *autonomia* member had been found with a plan of the base in his possession – a plan that was on the back of a leaflet that IMAC had been distributing all summer.

IF THE REAL '*autonomia*' problem in Comiso has so far been confined to a few graffiti, the movement presents something more of a problem in the north, where it has its natural home in Padova and Veneto. The complex of peace groups in the Veneto area is one of the strongest and most interesting in Italy. The main mobilising and mediating force in Veneto is a bricklayer-priest called Don Albino Bizzotto, and the movement in that area is regarded as having a Catholic (but not Christian Democrat) rather than Communist-party inspiration. Until recently, *autonomia* were uninterested in the peace movement, or actively opposed to it on the grounds that it was 'bourgeois hypocrisy'. Recently, however, they decided that it could provide them with a space to operate and started a phase of entryism with little 'mushroom' groups springing up overnight and coming along to vote at coordinating meetings. Many of the older groups withdrew, refusing to recognise decisions taken by such a coordination and, after the Rome demonstration on 19 November, a new coordination was formed which has apparently re-integrated the older groups in a new and workable form.

As for the oft-repeated assertion that there isn't a peace movement in Italy, it appears that there are as many people willing to do anything – from going for a walk, like the half million plus on 22 October, to being beaten and thrown into gaol – as there are anywhere else. They just organise themselves differently. As the deployment of the new missiles begins, Italy as a nation is experiencing the same sense of polarisation as elsewhere. The Communist party remains committed to the suspension of deployment and the inclusion of British and French nuclear forces in the Geneva talks. Many peace groups and factory councils are taking part in a popular referendum exercise which is producing some startling results (over 90 per cent 'No' to cruise at Alfa Romeo in Milan, for example). Among other groupings which have recently made a commitment to the peace movement are the nation's

Franciscan Friars, who raised eyebrows when they broke long-standing monastic tradition by inviting Enrico Berlinguer, the Communist Party secretary, to stay for lunch when he called on them in Assisi recently.

The somewhat ad-hoc nature of the Italian peace movement's organisation has certain advantages, its flexibility allowing it to finalise plans at short notice. At a meeting last weekend, delegates from about one hundred groups met in the via Muzio Clementi offices (inherited from the journal *Pace e Guerra*) to discuss strategy for December. Many of the actions will concentrate on Comiso and Sigonella, where there will be a week of demonstrations and blockades from 26 December until New Year's Eve – but a weekend of actions has also been arranged for 17 and 18 December to protest against the departure of some six hundred fresh troops for the peace-keeping force in the Lebanon.

Although the process of attempting to build a national coordination will continue, with another national assembly planned for February, it's in Sicily itself that the most important developments are likely to occur. The general process of displacement of armed forces towards the south is accelerating, with major development programmes underway at military airports at Trapani-Birgi, Catania (near Sigonella) and on the island of Pantelleria. At a NATO planning meeting last December in Brussels, the Italian government pledged its support for the Rapid Deployment Force, and it is most probable that units of RDF will be based at Sigonella (also, possibly, on Pantelleria, where quarters are being prepared for 15,000 men). It has also been announced that NATO Supreme Command for Italy will be moving from Naples to Sigonella airbase, which will thus be upgraded from being a support base for the 6th fleet to being a fully operational military base.

Another development which will stimulate opposition in Sicily is the proposed expropriation of some 50,000 acres of land in the Nebrodi mountains for a 'firing range'. As the area is about ten times the size of the largest existing range in Italy, it has been suggested that the area is intended as a dispersal ground for cruise, a suggestion made more plausible by the fact that the *autostrada* from Gela to S. Agata, which cuts through the proposed area, is being renovated with uncharacteristic haste.

Perhaps the powers that be did make an intelligent choice when they chose Comiso for their missiles. It seems as though the people there have not, after all, been confident or informed enough to defend themselves. But levels of organisation, knowledge and research have made a real leap in the last two years – in Sicily, the coordination of regional peace groups has produced a very complete dossier on the militarisation of their island, in conjunction with the 'Sicilian Documentation Centre' in Palermo and the Radical Party's IRDISP institute in Rome. In December, it will meet in Catania to decide how best to disseminate the information. One way or another, Sicily will never be the same after cruise. □

STATEMENT

by Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, made on 24 November 1983

The leadership of the Soviet Union has already brought its evaluations of the militaristic course of the present American administration to the notice of Soviet people and other peoples, and warned the governments of the United States and of the Western countries coming out at one with it about the dangerous consequences of this course.

But Washington, Bonn, London and Rome did not heed the voice of reason — the deployment of American medium-range missiles is beginning on the territory of the FRG, Britain and Italy. Thereby the appearance of American 'Persings' and Cruise missiles in the European continent is becoming an accomplished fact.

Europe is living in conditions of peace for almost 40 years — longer than ever before in modern history. This has become possible owing to the consistently peace-loving policy of the countries of the socialist community, the efforts of the continent's peace-loving forces and also the realistic position of sober-minded politicians in the West. The approximate balance of military forces, including nuclear ones, between the states of the North Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Treaty states, that has formed in Europe, objectively served the cause of European security and stability.

Now the United States and NATO as a whole are taking steps directed at tipping the scales in their favour. The nuclear missiles that are being deployed near the borders of the Soviet Union and its allies are not intended for the defence of Western Europe at all — no one is threatening it. What will grow with the deployment of American missiles on European soil is not the security of Europe but the real danger that the United States will bring catastrophe upon the peoples of Europe.

During the two World Wars the flames of destruction spared the territory of the United States of America. Now, too, the people in Washington would like to think that by deploying their medium-range missiles in Europe and creating thereby an additional nuclear threat to the socialist countries they would be able to divert the return strike from their house. As to the security of the West European allies of the United States, it looks that it interests the American leaders only to the extent to which the West Europeans will be able by their lives, by their cities to lessen the retribution for the United States, should Washington give in to the temptation to unleash nuclear war in the illusory hope of winning it.

The deployment of the American nuclear missiles in Western Europe is by no means a step prompted by a reaction to some supposedly existing concern in the West about the present alignment of forces of the sides in Europe. Many times, using concrete figures, it was proved — and this is accepted by many politicians and specialists in the West — that at present a rough parity continues to exist in Europe between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty as regards medium-range nuclear weapons, while NATO has a considerable edge in terms of nuclear warheads. So if anybody has cause to be concerned it is the Warsaw Treaty countries which are being threatened by the military machines of the NATO states.

Neither can the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community, when evaluating all this, turn a blind eye on the fact that Washington has also declared a 'crusade' against socialism as a social system and that those who have now issued the orders for the deployment

of new nuclear arms on the threshold of our house are basing their practical policy on this reckless premise. It appears that by deploying the Pershing-2s and Cruise missiles in Europe the governments of a number of NATO countries would want to create a concrete nuclear-missile foundation for this adventurist premise.

Can the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries ignore this danger? No, they cannot. That is why the highest party and state leaders of seven socialist countries declared at their meeting in Moscow on 28 June 1983 that under no circumstances will they permit a military superiority of the NATO bloc over the countries of the Warsaw Treaty.

When confirming their consent to the deployment of American missiles in their countries the governments of the FRG, Britain and Italy could not but know that it was from the outset that the United States did not want the attainment of a mutually acceptable accord on nuclear arms in Europe and did everything at the talks in Geneva and outside them to prevent such an accord. Likewise they could not but know that the Soviet Union and its allies would definitely take the necessary measures to safeguard their security, to prevent the United States and NATO as a whole from breaking the existing rough balance of forces in Europe.

It was also clearly stated by us that the appearance of new American missiles in Western Europe would make impossible a continuation of the talks that were being conducted in Geneva on nuclear arms in Europe.

The decisions adopted during the past few days by the governments of the FRG, Britain and Italy unequivocally show that contrary to the will of their own peoples, contrary to the interests of the security of their countries and contrary to the interests of European and universal peace these governments have given the green light to the deployment of the American missiles. Thereby they have assumed together with the government of the United States the entire responsibility for the consequences of the myopic policy about which the Soviet Union had warned in advance.

Having thoroughly weighed all the aspects of the obtaining situation the Soviet leadership adopted the following decisions:

First. Since by its actions the United States has torpedoed the possibility of reaching a mutually acceptable accord at the talks on questions of limiting nuclear arms in Europe and their continuation in these conditions would only serve as a cover for the actions of the United States and a number of other NATO countries directed at undermining European and international security, the Soviet Union considers its further participation in these talks impossible.

Second. Being cancelled are the Soviet Union's unilateral obligations which had for their purpose the creation of more favourable conditions for success at the talks. Thereby the moratorium on the deployment of Soviet medium-range nuclear weapons in the European part of the USSR is abrogated.

Third. On agreement with the governments of the GDR and Czechoslovakia the announced preparatory work to deploy on the territory of these countries operational-tactical missiles of increased range, that was started some time ago, will be accelerated.

Fourth. Since by deploying its missiles in Europe the United States increases the nuclear threat to the Soviet Union, the corresponding Soviet systems will be deployed with due ac-

count for this circumstance in ocean areas and in seas. By their characteristics these systems of ours will be adequate to the threat which is being created to us and our allies by the American missiles that are being deployed in Europe.

It goes without saying that other measures, too, will be taken to ensure the security of the USSR and the other countries of the socialist community.

As we commence the fulfilment of the decisions adopted by us we state that the reply measures from the Soviet side will be kept strictly within the limits that will be dictated by the actions of the NATO countries. The Soviet Union, and we stress this again, does not strive for military superiority, and we will do only what is absolutely necessary to prevent the military balance from being disrupted.

Should the United States and the other NATO countries display readiness to return to the situation that existed before the commencement of the deployment of the American medium-range missiles in Europe, the Soviet Union will also be prepared to do this. In that event our earlier proposals on questions of limiting and reducing nuclear arms in Europe would become valid again. In that case, that is on condition of the restoration of the former situation, the USSR's unilateral obligations in this field would also become effective again.

The Soviet Union declares with all firmness and in no uncertain terms that it remains an adherent of the principled course of ending the arms race, first of all the nuclear arms race, of lessening and ultimately totally removing the threat of nuclear war. It will further exert every effort for the attainment of these lofty aims.

The Soviet Union continues to come out for the most radical solution of the question of nuclear arms in Europe. It repeats its proposal to make Europe free of nuclear weapons altogether, both medium-range and tactical.

The Soviet leadership calls on the leaders of the United States and the West European countries to weigh once again all the consequences with which their own peoples and the whole of mankind are being threatened by the fulfilment of the plans to deploy the new American missiles in Europe.

As it is we are living in too brittle a world. That is why responsible statesmen must evaluate the developments and adopt a rational decision. It is human reason alone that can and must save mankind from the grave danger. We call on those who are pushing the world along the road of the ever more dangerous arms race to give up their unrealistic hopes of thus achieving military superiority in order to dictate their will to other peoples and states.

The Soviet Union is convinced that peace can be strengthened and the security of peoples guaranteed not by way of building up and inventing ever new types of armaments but, on the contrary, by way of reducing the existing armaments to immeasurably lower levels. Mankind has too many tasks which are not being solved only because colossal material, intellectual and other resources are being diverted. And from this viewpoint, too, the attainment of accords on a radical reduction of nuclear and other arms would be a boon for all peoples.

The Soviet leadership declares that in fulfilment of the Soviet people's will it will further do everything to ward off the danger of war and to preserve peace for the present and coming generations.



Novosti Press Agency

So you think you know all about women.

Test yourself with the following questions, the answers to which are at the foot of the page. The topic is women and transport.

- 1 There are over 22 million women in Britain today. What percentage of them do not have a driving licence?
Is it ☐ a 20% ☐ b 35% ☐ c 45% ☐ d 70%?
- 2 How many British women live in a household with no car?
Is it ☐ a 4 million ☐ b 6 million ☐ c 7 million ☐ d 9 million?
- 3 In most families it's still the mother who packs the children off to school. What percentage of all bus journeys in Britain made by children (up to 16 years old) is for going to school?
Is it ☐ a 10% ☐ b 20% ☐ c 24% ☐ d 34%?

4 What percentage of young mothers in a recent survey in the South of England were found to have no, or only occasional access to a car for shopping?

Was it ☐ a 25% ☐ b 40% ☐ c 50% ☐ d 60%?

5 Despite the number of car owning families in Britain, most shopping is still done by bus and still mainly by women. The average for the country is just under 2 shopping trips per household by bus. But over what period?

Is it ☐ a 2 trips a month ☐ b 2 trips a fortnight
☐ c 2 trips every ten days ☐ d 2 trips a week?

6 Of all the women who use the bus what percentage rely on it for shopping trips?

Is it ☐ a 36% ☐ b 46% ☐ c 56% ☐ d 66%?

7 Here's a question about attitudes. In a recent survey by the W.I. among women in rural areas, women with and without access to a car were asked if diminishing bus services affected them. What percentage said they would be seriously affected if their bus service disappeared?

Was it ☐ a Over 30% ☐ b Over 50% ☐ c Over 70% ☐ d Over 80%?

8 In the same survey, women living in rural areas were asked if they used the bus for visits to the doctor and for medical treatment. What percentage said they relied on the bus for such essential visits?

Was it ☐ a 29% ☐ b 39% ☐ c 49% ☐ d 59%?

How did you do? Score nothing for every ☐ a half for every ☐ b one for every ☐ c and five for every ☐ d

30-40: Congratulations, there's not much we can tell you on the subject. You may be interested to know that at a recent Convention in London, attended by a wide range of community interests, women and transport was one of the topics debated. The discussion is in our Convention Report, which we'll be happy to send you in exchange for the coupon.

15-30: Fair, but you'd obviously benefit from our free Convention Report. Why not send the coupon, now?

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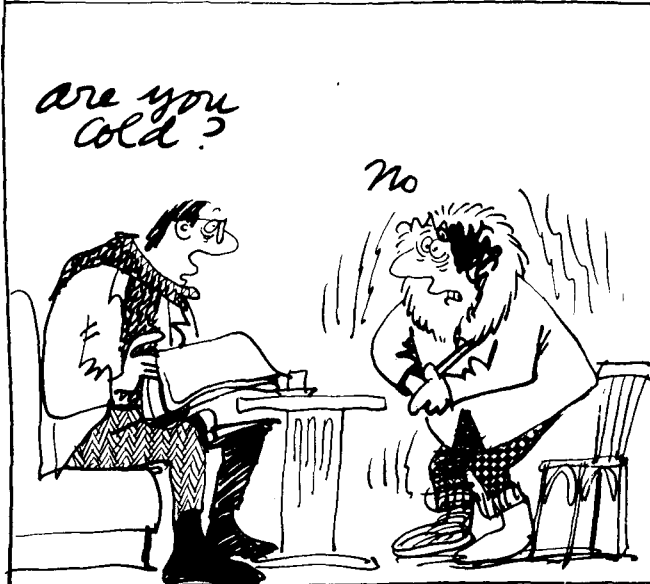
We'd all miss the bus



All facts and figures derive from published sources.

BRETECHER

THE WILLIES



BRETECHER

LETTERS

Women are mad, QED

Celia Holt, *Women and Mental Health Group*

David Berry (NS 25 November) mentions that three-fifths of all hospital mental patients are women. MIND's figure is 1 in 8 psychiatric admissions for women as against 1 in 12 for men. Some women mental health system survivors have recently begun to ask themselves why, and to bring into the arena of political debate what the significance of our experiences might be.

Until recently, even the women's movement has shied away from breaking the taboo surrounding the subject, but many of us are unwilling any longer to bury and hide periods of our lives which, although painful, taught us something of value; others are unwilling to pay the constant price exacted for being 'coping', 'adjusted' women. Mental 'illness' is a feminist issue.

A double standard of mental health imposes a Catch 22 on women. Many who are psychiatrically labelled are unhappy; self-destructive; economically powerless; sexually impotent – but, as women, they're supposed to be. The characteristics of normal femininity, as defined in standard psychological tests, are remarkably similar to those of depression – unassertiveness, passivity and introversion. On the other hand, women who step out of line and display such 'masculine' characteristics as aggressiveness are likely to have the epithet 'crazy' flung at them.

Psychiatry at an early stage manufactured labels such as 'hysteria' or 'nymphomania' to explain behaviour which would be quite acceptable in men. GPs are far more likely to give a psychological diagnosis for 'women's complaints' than for male illnesses. 'Endogenous' depression – supposedly of an internal, biochemical origin – is diagnosed far more frequently in women than in men. The implication is that we are biologically unstable.

Psychiatric treatment still relies almost exclusively on the use of psychotropic drugs and electro-convulsive treatment. Many women are left with the added problems of coping with the side-effects of such treatments and conquering drug dependence. The fact that most psychiatrists are men and most patients are women is only half the story; psychiatry as such tends to induce and maintain a dependence which reinforces and reflects our dependent social position.

Women and Mental Health formed recently to campaign for increased awareness of these issues and to set up crisis centres and support groups for women who have been through or need to avoid the psychiatric system. The response so far to our meetings and publicity indicates a growing feeling that mental 'illness' is not a personal, private, problem – the silence is at last being broken.

Leukaemia and plutonium

John Saunders, *Wiltshire*

It seems to me that Mr J. A. Preece of British Nuclear Fuels was being disingenuous with his assertion (Letters 25 November) that radiation levels at Seascale are only one thousandth of that necessary to cause the tenfold excess of leukaemia among young children. He ignores the existence of 'enhancement factors' which greatly magnify the effects of low level radiation. Two of these are the way plutonium tends to be concentrated in small dust particles which are highly respirable, and the way plutonium, once incorporated, localises around the bones, concentrating its

delivered dose to the bone marrow.

The first enhancement factor was verified by the International Commission on Radiological Protection which, in 1969, published ICRP-12. This report concluded that plutonium dust inhaled by workers handling nuclear materials in dust form was greater than indicated by a nearby static air sampler by a factor of 100-1,000.

The bone seeking properties of plutonium are particularly worrying since it can cross the placenta and affect the bone marrow of a growing foetus – leading to a further magnification in its effectiveness.

Diplomat's lunch

Sigmund Cohen, *Press Attache, United States Information Service*

Your Miscellany column (NS 25 November) got it all wrong on Ambassador Price. Not only has he never made the remarks attributed to him regarding Nicaragua, cruise missiles or the Greenham Common women, he neither hosted nor attended a lunch on 18 November with eight BBC journalists. For your information the Ambassador's diary shows him lunching with his son here at the Embassy.

Since a member of your staff phoned me regarding anything we might have about Frank Barber, the subject of the next 'Miscellany' item, he might have avoided the inaccurate report by checking the facts regarding Ambassador Price.

We regret the inaccuracy. However, we didn't get it all wrong. The lunch for the BBC did indeed take place, but it was hosted by the First Secretary rather than the Ambassador. All the remarks attributed to Mr Price were actually uttered by the First Secretary. Does that make them any less reprehensible? – Ed., Miscellany.

Police racism: final ultimate word

Don Kirkley, *Secretary, Brent Liaison Committee, NATFHE*

Perhaps I could be allowed a Final Word on the Police Cadet School dispute? First, what is the anti-racist position of the Kilburn Polytechnic branch? According to their secretary, the only policy difference is that they supported Brent Council's plan to forcibly redeploy (withdraw) staff at the Cadet School, while no one else does. Kilburn branch has representatives on this committee and the Outer London Regional Council of NATFHE. They failed to convince the members of this committee, Regional Council, National Council or the National Executive that withdrawal was sensible. The majority of this committee were opposed to withdrawal because:

- 1) It was not an effective sanction against the police.
- 2) Withdrawal would cost Brent £250,000 extra p.a. and they would want redundancies.
- 3) Brent had a hung council and supporting withdrawal would place members' jobs in danger if control changed.
- 4) Withdrawal would remove any chance of influencing events at the School.

Regarding the second point, Brent informed this committee in February that, if withdrawal went ahead, they would want up to 30 redundancies. On the third point, one Brent councillor who decided on the withdrawal has recently decided that her fight for improving black education is best carried on within the Tory Party.

Secondly, there is no scheming 'leadership' riding roughshod over an outraged rank and file. All the decisions have been arrived at in a democratic way after a long and careful debate. Tim Butler, attending his first Regional Council meeting for two years, conveniently fails to mention that Council voted to support the Chairman's ruling. Having failed to turn Council into a 'kangaroo court', he then tried, and failed, to render the meeting inquorate by leading a walkout. He is also wrong about the Secretary not presenting motions correctly to National Council.

John Fernandes's letter contains a picture of the union and past events which people directly involved would not recognise. Both his letter and that of some Hendon members equate support for an anti-racist stand with Kilburn branch's campaign in support of Brent Council. The logic escapes me still. Two of the Hendon signatories were present at negotiations as representatives of the Barnett Liaison Committee so they were not bypassed.

This correspondence is now closed – Ed.

For the record

Ben Griffith, *London WC1*

Most of the additions to my article (NS 25 November) on private medicine were fine, quibbles aside. But the latest figures on privatised 'ancillary' services relate to 1981 not 1983. Worse: 'Only hospitals with 100 beds or more come under the authority of the Health Service Board.' The Tories abolished the Health Services Board in 1980 and now private hospitals need to be 'authorised' by the Social Services Secretary only when they would include 120 or more beds or would be built in 'designated' districts (of which there are none). As a result, all private hospital developments since 1980 have merely been 'notified' to the Secretary of State.

Come to think of it, why do I bother? These inaccuracies will not be attributed to me as you got my name wrong, too.

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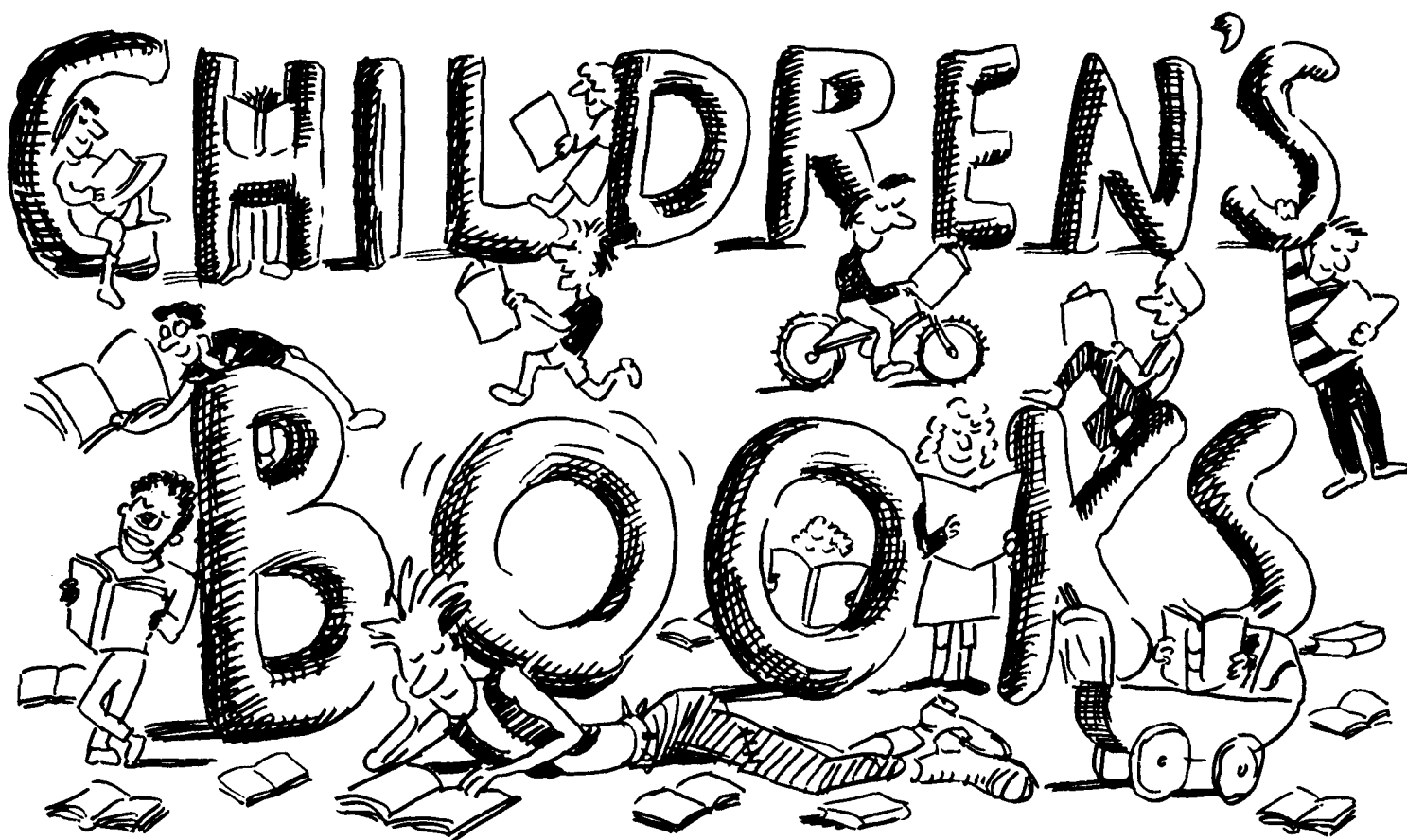
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BOOKS & ARTS



THE TROUBLE with the under-fives is that they've got no taste. Present them with a range of books, and they will generally chose the brightest, cleanest pictures; the niceties of graphic technique pass them by. The corollary of this is that many illustrators of children's books parade their own tastes too obviously; a fair proportion of the more expensive new books clothe a weak story line with beautifully crafted illustrations, nice for the adults buying them, irrelevant to the children consuming them.

Occasionally pictures and text come together splendidly: *Norah's Ark* by Ann and Reg Cartwright (Hutchinson, £4.95) is a fine successor to their equally delightful *Mr Potter's Pigeon*. Reg Cartwright's paintings are Beryl Cook-ish in their bright primary colours and kindly pneumatic figures, each beautifully composed; Ann's reworking of the Bible story is a gentle rural fable, without any religious trappings. I'm not sure Nicola Bayley and William Mayne's *The Mouldy* (Cape, £4.95) maintains that thin line between fantasy and pretension. Bayley's pictures are characteristically ornate, and Mayne's text is equally baroque, heavy on symbolism and just a little too richly inventive for easy comprehension. The Mouldy himself is a mole who brings destruction to the Great Garden of the World from the wilderness beneath. He's defeated of course. The book is saved from being just another leap on to the fantasy band-wagon by the pictures, but it's a close run thing.

Monika Beisner's *Book of Riddles* (Cape,

Andrew Clements

Brightest is best

£4.95) is aimed, I would guess, at school-age children. A page of riddles is opposite each opulent full-page picture, in which all the answers are concealed. Clever, and easy on the eye. *Anno's USA* by Mitsumasa Anno (Bodley Head, £5.50) is a tour de force: no words, just a sequence of exquisite views of America, moving from West to East and crammed with detail to be prised out by sharp young eyes. It should appeal to a wide age-range. Both Max Bolliger and Peter Sis's *The Little Singer* (Hutchinson, £5.50) and Helme Heine's *The Most Wonderful Egg in the World* (Dent, £4.95) are simple tales, imaginatively illustrated. Sis's world of dwarves is a grainy, pastel one; Heine's vivid, witty paintings make his book accessible to the very young. *Orville's Outing* (Cape, £4.95) is a curious effort from Bonnie Timmons: cartoon-style pictures, handwritten text and delicate, touching story.

The rather plain illustrative style of *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* by Tomie

de Paola (Methuen, £2.95) disguises a useful book. *Nana Upstairs* is senile and bed-ridden; *Nana Downstairs* is the typically active, interventionist grandmother. *Nana upstairs* dies; years later *Nana downstairs* is bed-ridden in turn. As an introduction to the difficult task of explaining old-age and death to young children it is highly effective and not at all mawkish. The series *Jafta's Family*, with stories by Hugh Lewin and pictures by Lisa Kopper, has a very clear missionary purpose – to introduce Western children to life in the Third World. The first four titles dealt with Jafta's life in the country, but the latest pair, *Jafta – the Journey* and *Jafta – the Town* (Evans, £2.95 each) takes him into a southern African city. The monochrome pictures are bold and striking, without cosmetic glosses; the stories are deliberately unsentimental: Jafta goes to the town to visit his father 'who has to work there'.

At the more modest end of the market, children's books now seem to arrive not singly but in carefully packaged series. John Burningham's *Number Play* (Walker Books) already has six titles. It aims to instil the elements of numeracy, from say three years old, beginning with counting and recognition and going on to very basic addition and subtraction and reading numbers as words. The fold-out format is cleverly used, but at £2.50 a book the series is probably aimed at play-schools rather than parents; the educational ground it covers is really not that great, despite the charm of the

drawings. Charm is also the main virtue of the latest of Hanna Türk's **Max** series (Neugebauer Press, £1.50 each). The hero is a winsome mouse, and his wordless adventures are splendidly drafted. But it really is hard work extracting a narrative from some of them; as expensive Christmas cards or stocking fillers, though, they might find a niche.

Dogs, Bees, Worms and Blood and Plasters (Methuen, £1.75) by Leila Berg and Lisa Kopper are very firmly aimed at four-to five-year-olds and hit their mark; the topics are just the kinds of things that fascinate pre-school children. The start of a series called *Small World*, they present useful facts with amusing, bright illustrations in a witty way – what more can the junior vampire ask?

Helen Oxenbury's **First Picture Books** (Walker Books £2.95 each) have the same formula and work with the same age group. There are six books so far, all of them dealing with familiar, firmly middle-class situations – *The Dancing Class*, *Eating Out*, *Playschool*, *The Birthday Party* – in a gently ironic tone that not only understands the way in which children behave, but is aware of adults' foibles also. They will strike a chord with many parents.

Methuen has launched a **Pocket Bears** series with an assorted bunch, some of them straightforward bedtime stories, others in pictorial form with speech bubbles – which make them peculiarly exhausting for reading aloud. They mix reissues with new titles; we most enjoyed Naomi Lewis and Tony Ross's **Hare and Badger go to Town**, solid anti-pollution propaganda, and Tony Ross's **The Greedy Little Cobbler**, a nice parable of the perils of capitalism (both £1.50).

Pure story books for bedtime reading are thin on the ground this year, and the best of them seem to be compilations of well-tried tales. **Mark the Drummer Boy** by Dorothy Edwards (Methuen, £4.95) and Naomi Lewis's **The Magic Doll** (Magnet, £1.50) are handy collections. The doll stories are sometimes quite complex, which would appeal to children who could read for themselves as well. In the Blackbird series from Julia Macrae Books (£2.95 each) **Tom's Tale** by Judith Stinton and **Moving** by Meguido Zola are medium-length stories, with refreshingly modest line illustrations. **Moving** is particularly interesting in giving the heavily exploited subject of moving house a new twist: it's set 50 years ago in Canada in a Hutterite colony, a tale freshly and concisely told.

Very few glossy non-fiction titles seem worth a mention. Those that are tend to be either ecological or biological, and aimed at an older age group. Richard Mabey's **Oak & Company** (Kestrel Books, £4.50) looks at the life in and around an oak tree – solid enough, though prosaically illustrated. Clive Catchpole's **Jungles and Deserts** (Walker Books, £4.50 each) are accurate ecological portraits with stunning illustrations by Denise Finney and Brian McIntyre respectively. And even if the format is a little too obviously designed for international co-editions, the children won't mind. □

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SIX TO ELEVEN p.p. Henry Tube

Cover stories

UNCLE HENRY'S not really up to it this year. He's read most of the books, or had them read to him, but after we'd shut him in his study as usual with his typewriter and the 50-odd books in question, there was nothing but silence for the next two hours. When we opened the door a crack to see if he was asleep we saw he was standing on the typewriter trying to pin book-jackets to the ceiling. The trouble, he said, was getting started. If you couldn't get the right start you might as well decorate the ceiling or cut your throat.

So why not start with the covers, Uncle Henry? Seriously, four of them are by the same artist – wild and wombly Quentin Blake – and surely if you'd written a children's book you'd want Q.B. to illustrate it, not only because he makes it look so lively, but because he never seems to get attached to a dud author. Out of this bunch, for instance, he's got Roald Dahl, Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, Joan Aiken and Michael Rosen. Now Michael may not be on his best form this year with **Quick Let's Get Out of Here** (Deutsch, £5.95), but Joan's **Mortimer's Cross** (Cape/BBC, £5.50) is brilliant at creating complete chaos out of a perfectly ordinary Cockney family and its pet raven and Jonathan's **Cyril Bonhamy and the Great Drain Robbery** (Cape, £4.95) is exciting as well as funny, especially its feeble hero wearing his nose cover against sunburn in the South of France and being mistaken for a crook in disguise by a genuine crook in disguise.

As for **The Witches** (Cape, £6.50), Roald's a genius. ('Steady on!') How is it he thinks of an utterly different story every new book, how is it once you've started reading you can't stop, how is it you enjoyed it as much as we did (that's 6, 9, 11 and 63, not a bad spread), how is it it's so real you think it must be true (can the RSPCC ever hold another convention after this? Can anyone not believe in witches?) and so fantastic you can't begin to guess that will happen next? ('Genius is a big word.') We hope for your sake, uncle, that he'll leave some of his royalties to the Royal Literary Fund, because you may need their help any day and a lot of it comes from the Pooh royalties. Those won't go on for ever, will they, and if there's any children's author alive who's the equal of A.A. and Beatrix and Lewis and Robert Louis, it must be Roald. ('Genius, then, if you insist.')

Maybe Terry Jones is working up to be a genius, too. His *Fairy Tales*, which the *NS* called 'book of the year' in 1981, is now in paperback (Puffin, £3.95), and he's written a new book called **The Saga of Erik the Viking** (Pavilion/Michael Joseph, £6.95).

Every adventure Erik and his comrades have on their voyage to the edge of the world and back is more terrifying than the last – you can't think how they'll escape or how Terry will get them off the hook, but somehow they do and so does he. ('A lot of it's borrowed, you know, from things like *The Odyssey* and the Nordic Sagas.') You're very clever, uncle, but I wonder if you noticed that story in Terry's *Fairy Tales* about the herring who swam round the world and thought he knew everything? He was caught and eaten by a man who never knew the herring knew everything there was to know. Also, even though Terry hasn't got Q.B. to do the pictures, he has got Michael Foreman who's terrific with colour and with dizzy scenes of overwhelming seas and rocks and monsters.

Polly Devlin's stories from her Irish childhood, **The Far Side of the Lough** (Gollancz, £5.50), aren't fairy stories, as you might think, but sound as if they're true, though she says they're fiction. Anyway, as told by her Irish nursemaid, they can be quite a shock to read, especially the first one. You end up with a very strong feeling of what it was like to live in a remote country place where there was not only a mad parafin-man but also mad Black-and-Tans from England who, if they didn't shoot you, might shoot up all your best crockery and leave your house a ruin. It's a relief to turn to Rumer Godden's **The Valiant Chattimaker** (Macmillan, £4.50), another story originally told by a nursemaid – an Indian one this time – but very gentle and humorous and not at all life-like, since the Chattimaker (pot-maker) ties up a tiger thinking it's his donkey and defeats an army by riding a runaway horse and raising a cloud of dust.

But after *The Witches* and *Erik the Viking* the two most gripping stories were Derek Denton's **Don't Go Near the Magic Shop!** (Goodchild, £5.95), about children (and adults) transported by an evil magician to another world where everything's a nightmare; and **Little Dog Lost** (Methuen, £3.95) by Nina Warner Hooke, which is too good at understanding what it's like to be a stray dog in Spain to be sentimental, though it's certainly sad and tense, and the author can lift you up one minute and drop you down the next, just as if you were the dog. We'd also recommend another dog story – **Hound of Darkness** by Joyce Stranger (Dent, £5.95) – which is mostly a horse story and a flood story set in Wales. ('Romantic twaddle, if you ask me.')

For younger readers who prefer something more jokey there's Margaret Mahy's **The Pirates' Mixed-Up Voyage** (Dent, £5.95), which is an adventure, a mystery and a crazy mixed-up jig-saw puzzle of a book, with some good characters (made better still by Margaret Chamberlain's drawings of them), particularly Mrs Hatchett the gun-toting teacher and Detective Inspector Carstairs, with her grubby raincoat, squashy hat and golden curls. But Jeremy Strong's **The Woff and Fatbag** (A. & C. Black, £3.95 and £3.50) are short knockabout stories which will make you laugh aloud if you're young enough. The Woff is an egg-sized alien who causes havoc

in a school and Fatbag is a demented vacuum cleaner that terrorises a whole town.

And now, uncle, you can come down off the typewriter, because it's all over bar two oddities. **Never a Dull Moment** (Walker, £4.95) has about 20 authors and 21 illustrators and will keep you from the black sulks with puzzles and riddles, masks and mime, amazing facts, knots and juggling, how to make a tepee and a quick guide to dinosaurs. Why are we so keen on dinosaurs? Perhaps we think of them as imaginary pets. **How to Keep Dinosaurs** (Deutsch, £4.95) by Robert Mash (a genuine zoologist), with amazing photo-realist illustrations by Philip Hood and Diz Wallis and cartoon drawings by William Rushton, is the last word on that. It's all divided into sections, according to size and suitability, whether you want dinosaurs as pets or for their skins or meat or as attractions for your zoo or safari-park. Or you might want them as egg-layers, though there are problems:

Anatosaurus eggs are about nine inches long and, even for dinosaur eggs, are notoriously hard to crack. If an egg is for frying, scrambling or an omelette, use an electric drill with a half-inch masonry bit . . .

Microvenator sounds like the best choice as a pet, small, loveable and easy-to-feed, except that, as Robert says: 'Some, like cats, are nocturnal but, unlike cats, they should not be put out at night as they will eat cats, not to mention dogs.' □



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TEEN READING

Charles Fox

Beyond tact

THE NOTION of good or bad taste is one that scarcely seems to matter when the context is the future or the past. Senility, for example, rarely gets taken into account in those scientific fantasies which envisage the human lifespan as stretching on and on. Dubliners who went to gawp at Dr Swift in his dotage evoke amazement in us rather than disgust. But presentday writers who aim to raise even a friendly laugh by tackling the aged and infirm do need special gifts of tact and sensibility. William Trevor and Kingsley Amis got away with it in, respectively, *The Old Boys* and *Ending Up*. Rather more surprisingly, for her book is aimed at children, Anne Fine does so too in *The Granny Project* (Methuen, £5.50), a book that against all the odds contrives to be both audacious and heart-warming.

Granny is 87, a persistent bedwetter, her bloomers and stockings likely to slide down as soon as she toddles outdoors, yet abreast of all the intricacies of TV soap-operas. Her son and his Russian-born wife would like to despatch her to an Old People's Home. Their four children are appalled by the suggestion. Indeed, the eldest boy, Ivan, turns the situation into raw material for his School Project, documenting even the briefest visit by the doctor — 'Mr and Mrs H. seemed almost disappointed to hear that Parasthesia (jumpy legs) was not a fatal disease'. Father and mother refuse to be blackmailed; instead they hand over to the children responsibility for cooking, cleaning and laundering, collecting their granny's pension, tuning her radio and checking she has water in her glass.

The result is a second Project, this time based on Granny's recollections of a long-ago childhood ('Chilblains? We were all covered in them, hands and feet. You couldn't cram your toes into your boots, half the time, without crying. We even had chilblains on our knees and our ears'). There is the occasional gruesomeness, always fascinating to the young ('When times were very hard and they ran out of acorns all about, my grandmother's father boiled up her cat's drowned kittens to feed the pig'). Conversation dominates the book to such an extent that one realises what might have happened had E. Nesbitt set up a menage with Ivy Compton-Burnett.

Relevance has acquired a special importance during the past couple of decades. And next to old age and senility, nothing could be more pertinent to our times than racialism. Rhodri Jones, a Welsh headmaster of a comprehensive in North London, takes on the subject in *Delroy is Here* (Dent, £5.95), narrating the plight of a boy born in Britain of West Indian parents.

From time to time the book, just like Delroy, puts on a Jamaican voice. The game of trading insults, described near the beginning, captures the black kids' capacity for outrageous self-mockery ('Get back on the banana boat', yells Bradman to Ant'ny). Delroy's liveliest friends have their own racial hang-ups ('Bloody Paks!'), wear Cecil Gee trousers at the disco run by a Rastafarian d-j, and are not above nicking bars of chocolate at the sweetshop. But Delroy avoids being led too far astray, encouraged by a teacher, Miss Lasky (Jewish, a woman and a mouthpiece for liberal arguments). Despite some over-tidy characterisation and a sentimental, unrealistic ending, the story is usefully perceptive about what is happening in the streets and just around the corner.

History, as always, offers a safer milieu. For instance, one of the most beguiling aspects of Antonia Barber's *The Ring in the Rough Stuff* (Cape, £5.50) is the snugness of its setting. The fo'c'sle of a Thames sailing barge — small, cramped, yet somehow idyllic — is described with a meticulousness which almost convinces the reader that 12-year-old Daniel Swann was lucky to be around in 1915, working from dawn to dusk for half-a-crown a week, ('all found, minus breakages'). The physical setting, embracing the Medway brickfields as well as aboard the barge, commands more attention than the book's characters, among whom the nice tend to be nicer and the nasty nastier (a bit like Dickens, in fact) than they might be had the author been dealing with the presentday. Melodrama keeps butting in (a U-boat sinks a warship, jewel-thieves are on the prowl), yet the most exciting passages are really the technical descriptions of how to navigate a Thames barge, including 'booming out', a strategem very similar to punting — and just as hazardous.

The Great War (as it must still be called) also provides a background for Elsie McCutcheon's *Summer of the Zeppelin* (Dent, £5.95). Elvira's father is at the Front; she lives with a bossy stepmother and a small brother, very hard to shake off. At a moment when the public is prepared to credit that enemy planes may be dropping poisoned sweets on the countryside, German prisoners-of-war get brought to a village in East Anglia. Far from being the brutal Hun that Elvira expects, one of them plays Bach and bandages a sprained ankle. Contemporary attitudes are nicely picked out within a society where milk costs a tanner a quart, goosegrass is collected to make a coffee substitute, and meat is kept in a metal larder hanging on the wall. It is an event to glimpse an aeroplane, let alone the Zeppelin ('making a noise like a hundred railway trains') which eventually unloads its bombs. Nothing pleased this reviewer more, though, than recognising in Elvira a fellow bookworm, familiar with *Christie's Old Organ*, *A Peep Behind The Scenes* and other masterpieces of piety. The blend, in fact, remains engaging, even if the style is over-literary, the pace a trifle sedate.

No criticism of that sort could be levelled at Robert Westall's *Futuretrack 5* (Kestrel, £5.95), its writing often disturbingly staccato, the events overtaking one another, yet

throbbing with an imaginative energy that keeps the reader on tenterhooks. The time is the 21st century. Britain's population is split into three classes: Techs, Ests and the lumpen-proletarian Unnems, with Oriental Paramils doing all the policing. Old habits have a way of persisting. There is, for example, an etiquette of dress as rigid as that observed by Old Etonians or young punks. Techs 2p leave one button of their white coats undone; those above 3a leave two; the coats of fives remain completely open.

But the bulk of the book describes a flight that is also a quest. Henry Kitson, a Tech on the loose, is accompanied by — to quote the blurb — 'blonde, leather-clad Keri, London's bike-racing champion of Futuretrack 5'. Sex turns up; so do sentences such as 'A bugger-you kind of knock'. And the homely images frequently turn out to be the most sinister. The Fens, for instance, have become an area without television, a place in which old-time rural virtues flourish, yet where the flypaper is bugged. Laura, the premier computer of Britain, housed in Cambridge, behaves like a nagging wife, only to have an heretical tape slotted into her system. It supplies a religious and moral dimension, yet without any corresponding uplift in the machine's sensitivity to language. Which is why on the penultimate page, Laura's print-out proclaims: FORTUNATE ARE THE UNDRUNKEN FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD. □

VERSE FOR CHILDREN

Michael Rosen

Rhymeo nasties

I'VE JUST had a row with my three-year-old because I won't read **Jelly Belly** by Dennis Lee (Blackie, £5.95) for the 200th time. Here are Robber J. Badguy, Sister Lister, Anna Banana, Peter Stampeder and many more in a torrent of new rhymes, jingles and finger rhymes. Any grown-up yawning over Humpty and gang: this is the book for you and for the under-five. 'Wiggle-waggle went the bear, Catching bees in his underwear.'

There are some familiar names in this year's crop. Roger McGough's **Sky in the Pie** (Kestrel, £4.95) is full of witty quickies: 'My wife bought a fire guard for the living room./Seems a nice sort of chap.' He stretches words to mad conclusions and throws in the odd pacifistic dig. In between are bits of banal, idiotic prose — like O-level essays gone wrong. A great buy for twelve-year-olds upwards.

Allen Ahlberg, children's book addicts love well from **Peepo**, **Burglar Bill** and many others. You can extend the addiction with his poems about school for six-plus-year-olds in **Please Mrs Butler** (Kestrel, £4.50). Copy-cats, slow readers, supply teachers, swops, picking teams . . . the book smells like 'Wet Play', Friday afternoon, No-

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vember. The critical élite within the tiny, bitchy world of poetry for children has attacked this book. Ignore them. It is authentic, intimate and sticky.

Roald Dahl's **Dirty Beasts** (Cape, £4.95) is of course beastly and dirty — a rhymeo nasty, in fact. Various creatures — Pig, Crocodile, Scorpion, etc — attack humans in the medium of RAF doggerel gusto. 'I ran for home, I shouted, 'Mum!'/Behold the prickles in my bum'. Great for 3-11s. I can't say the same for John Fuller's **Come Aboard and Sail Away** (Salamander, £6). I won't be able to take this to the children I meet in schools. It's just too esoteric for words.

Edward Lear's **Gromboolian Poems** (Macmillan, £5.95) get the guide book/illustrated atlas treatment from artist Jenny Thorne. My feeling is that this is a great book for adult Lear freaks. Sadly, Dent has decided to reprint the Farjeons' **Kings and Queens**. It is a load of royalist rubbish. Inaccurate, racist, militarist, chauvinist, sexist and £5.95-ist. Don't touch it.

John Agard, Guyanese born, travels the country with his bag of Caribbean goodies, penetrates lightest white-man's land and dazzles and amazes many. In **I Din Do Nuttin** (Bodley Head £3.50) there are some of his numbers for the under-tens. I've seen kids learn 'Bambalitty Bam-Bam' out of sheer delight and giggle all over at the girl who swallowed a seed so she could have a baby brother. One of the Caribbean dialects gets an airing, courageous publishing by Bodley Head in the face of the Bash'em-with-BBC-English, We-prefer-to-forget-Burns brigade.

Who remembers *Voices*? Now Geoffrey Summerfield, the man who showed us the 1,000-voiced language of poetry 25 years ago, has collected his own stuff together in **Welcome** (Deutsch, £5.95). If you're thinking of something for a thoughtful 12+-year-old, there are some great things here. Some of it is childhood memory, some of it is wordplay and some is legend. My two favourites are the one about the man lurking behind the tree — 'You're not my Dad,' I said — and 'A Yorkshire Tale' where a waggon-and-team plunge into Gormire Lake. Great narrative poems.

A Pocketful of Painful Puns and Poems by Jonathan Allen (Dent, £3.95) is full of visual punning — imagine the pictures for 'A hot-air baboon' or 'A holiday in grease'. If you've got an eight-plus-year-old driving you mad with howlers kill her/him with this one.

Bogle-L'Ouverture, the pioneering black publishers, published 11-year-old Accabre Huntley's **At School Today** in 1977. Accabre is 16 now and has written **Easter Monday Blues** (£2.75). I wanted more than the eleven poems here, but there are some magnificent moments: 'I wanted to take/a crash course/on living/but I was told/it really ain't/worth learning.' Perhaps BLO could publish some of the hundreds of dialect poems, raps and lyrics that secondary-school students are writing now. I've made a small collection myself and 11-16-year-olds fight to get hold of my grubby photocopies.

In the collection bag there's **The Beaver**

Book of Revolting Rhymes (ed. J. & C. Curry), which will give you bogies, farts, sick, germs, blood, booze, murder and underwear — all for a quid. **Poems for Fun** (ed. Z. & I. Woodward, Beaver, £1.25) is my seven- and three-year-old's bedtime 'Once-more-dad-go-on' book.

My friend and collaborator Quentin Blake has picked 16 nursery rhymes about people (mostly mad, glad or sad) and done an all-colour job on them for Cape at £4.95. The three-year-old's gone and taken it away and sits under the table with it, with a Do Not Disturb Notice in his eyes. A big yes for one to five.

Rhymes Around the Day by Ormerod/Thomson (Kestrel, £4.50) is a pleasant, if suburbanised nursery rhyme book. Plenty of good, positive pictures of girls — as it happens, all white.

In the song-book bag, don't miss **Game Songs** (A. & C. Black, £3.95); and at long last you can have a recorder book with tunes that children might actually like, know and want to accompany other children singing along with them: **Hey Presto** (A. & C. Black, £3.95). Please buy this to kill those green Schott's monsters. Remember them?

PS: Please read/sing/shout/dance these books, *out loud*, with children. Don't mutter. Tape them. Perform them. □

APOLOGIES for the absence of shorter reviews and an adult fiction review; both will be back next week.

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John Levett

A footnote to MacNeice

I've watched your syllables, their dance
With detail over dissonance
In patterns that both old and new
Simultaneously construe
Tradition and what might come next,
Spontaneous, rehearsed, perplexed;
The stylish way you could discard
Old theories and the avant-garde
Effects of reaching farther back
Than childhood for the steep attack
Of rhyme upon the placid eye
And language upon memory.
Approaching death your Muse danced on
Obsessed with the quotidian,
Your verses gave their minute plots
Slim, dandified, acoustic knots
Like form and content shaking hands,
The tactful wink such truck demands,
And rhyme was never far below
The Stygian, unbroken flow
Of dark subconsciousness that fed
An even darker fountainhead.
If you, armed with such excellence,
Could not succeed in making sense
Of this profusion what chance is
There now for any synthesis?
Although you gave a hint with your
Austerely textured metaphor
Of what might lie beyond the screen
You never could quite swear you'd seen
Those Concrete Universals that
So frightened the Platonic Bat.
Now you are dead and we are left
With plunder from heroic theft,
The knick-knacks of the gods, the sights
That shape our visual appetites,
The sounds that range beyond the eyes
And race the waves for exercise,
The irony, the beach, the rain,
The journeys on that endless train
(Our witness in the corner seat
To all that must be incomplete),
And still-lives with imagined fruit
That burgeoned on the absolute
And ripened with a general love
That now, for us, must be enough.

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OPERA
Andrew Clements

En bloc

Saint François d'Assise
Paris Opera

One of the final fruits of Rolf Liebermann's reign at the Paris Opera came to maturity on Monday with the première of Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise*, amid a good deal of the glamour and glitter that attend such events in France. It took eight years to arrive; Liebermann commissioned Messiaen in 1975. That prolonged gestation, even by this composer's own measured standards, is amply reflected in the score's dimensions – it calls for an enormous orchestra, so large that it overflowed from the Palais Garnier's capacious pit on to the sides of the stage and to the boxes above, and seven principal soloists; it also lasts, with intervals, six hours.

Messiaen is not by natural inclination, one would have thought, a theatrical composer, for all the naive theatricality of some of his constructions. The subtitle of *Saint François* seems to acknowledge this; Messiaen calls it '*Scènes Franciscaines*' and only as an afterthought, 'an opera in three acts and eight tableaux'. The flexibility of intensity and temperament that conventional dramatic pacing requires is quite foreign to his naturally fervent religiosity; the last 20 years have seen his music become progressively more monumental, hewn from monoliths of material that do not develop but just exist. *Saint François*, it must be said, does nothing to break this progression.

For all their rough chronology the eight scenes do not constitute a through-composed plot, but are self-contained scenes from the life of St Francis, from his early years as a travelling monk (his dissolute adolescence is tactfully ignored) through miracles and teaching, stigmatisation and death. Each is less a dramatic reconstruction than a meditation: Messiaen drew his text from a variety of Franciscan sources and St Francis's own writings as well as adding interpolations of his own. It is densely theological and profoundly Roman Catholic, hard to grasp in its full implications for a non-believer.

Comprehension is not helped by his refusal to set the words to melodic lines that take account of natural prosody; voices are regarded almost instrumentally, as if the articulation of the text is more important than its communication. As if to emphasise the hieratic, quasi-oratorical approach identifiable characters are trimmed to the bare minimum; there is no room for St Clare, for Francis's audiences with the Pope, or the episode with the wolf of Gubbio. Instead there is simply an angel, sung by a high soprano, François himself (baritone), the leper whom he cures (tenor) and four

brother monks, with two more in minor roles.

None of these is explored or developed; they simply function as instruments of God's will, vessels through which the divine grace can pass. In the absence of anything identifiable, anything remotely personal, the non-specialist, non-Catholic listener might well despair. In this production especially he or she will lack a strong visual image also; what pictorial element there is has been woefully diminished by the inadequacies of the staging. It's difficult to escape the feeling that there is little new in *Saint François*, little that could not have been extrapolated from Messiaen's great choral work of the late 1960s, *La Transfiguration*, save for a more or less coherent plot and some instrumental effects that Messiaen would never have allowed in the austerity of a solemn religious celebration. Perhaps the strongest suggestion of an imagination released by dramatic necessity is to be found within the orchestral textures.

Those purple passages provide at least some compensation for a long evening in the theatre. Messiaen is incapable of writing so much without producing moments of extraordinary beauty, and there are some things that seem to me among the finest things he has written. The three acts are shaped with considerable architectural finesse also, curving up to an enormous, virtuosic climax in the third scene of the second act, when St Francis preaches to the birds; dispelling the accrued elation in the fierce, dark sonorities of the beginning of the third act, when he receives the stigmata, and ending in relative resignation with death. The first act uses its material economically, a handful of motifs (each character is assigned his own material, a Wagnerian scheme worked out in an utterly un-Wagnerian way) and some scraps of birdsong; the second act, concerned with the angel until the final scene, spreads its stylistic net wider until it erupts into a tumult of birds at the close, freely notated lines that in their colour and energy go far beyond anything Messiaen has attempted before.

There is always the characteristic sound of Messiaen's orchestral music too – glittering xylophone toccatas layering birdsongs in canon upon canon, woodwind verses to vocal responses, apocalyptic gongs and bells; most of all there is the glutinous sound of the ondes Martenot, three of them in this orchestra, adding shimmering haloes to the sound, going off on extraordinary melodic tangents of their own, sometimes quite magically enunciating simple, diatonic melodies. There are echoes too of past scores: a brass tag from the *Turangalila* Symphony keeps inserting itself as an image of joy, and many of the birdsongs have been used before, though Messiaen has added some from his recent journeys in the islands of New Caledonia.

Such a lavish score could hardly have hoped for a better musical performance. Seiji Ozawa worked wonders with the Opera orchestra, producing playing of marvellous security and precision; among the soloists José van Dam was an outstanding François, always note perfect, and suggesting

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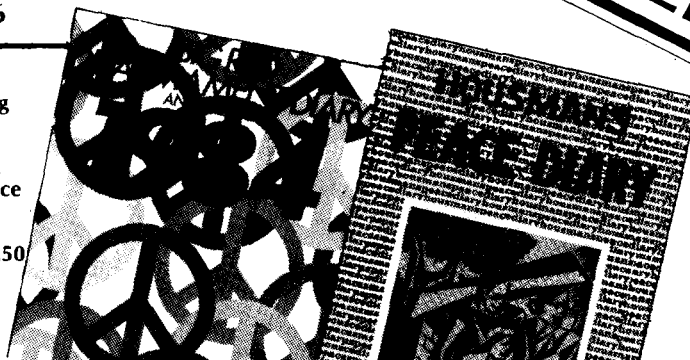
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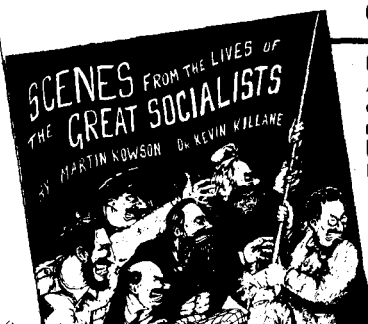
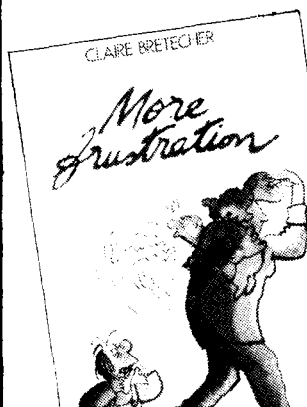
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the simple gravity the work implies; it provides its singers with very few opportunities for genuine acting. Christian Eda-Pierre as the Angel had the most alluring vocal lines, melodies clothed in honeyed harmonies, and unerringly spun off.

With the support of such performances and a more imaginative hand on the production, a convincing case for *Saint François* as a stage work might have been made. Messiaen's libretto is highly explicit in its stage directions; some of them may be idealistic but they are not unsophisticated, nor entirely impractical. Quite why Sandro Sequi and his designer Giuseppe Crisolini-Malatesta should have ignored them on quite such a wholesale scale is inexplicable, particularly when they are replaced by stage pictures of such utter fatuity and skimpily realised designs. Messiaen's lapidary text brings with it a wealth of iconography: the image of the Leper should mirror that in Grünewald's altarpiece, the angels recall those of Fra Angelico.

Apart from a miserable failure to project some Giotto-like angels on to the backcloth and some insipid pictures of the Italian countryside these hints are also ignored. The result is ugly and depressing; those moments of genuine uplift that Messiaen's score contains – the healing of the Leper, the appearance of the Angel to François, the blessing of the birds – are flattened out by the insensitive hand. It would be fascinating to hear the score in concert performance, perhaps split over two evenings; without expectations of a dramatic presentation, one might not miss the lack of pacing so much and concentrate instead on its many and undeniable incidental beauties. □

FILMS

John Coleman

Past presents

A Star is Born (U)

Gate, Notting Hill

Rear Window (PG)

Plaza; Screen on the Hill; Classic, Chelsea

Parade (U)

Barbican

There was always one pretty heavy irony embodied in George Cukor's 1954 musical re-make of *A Star is Born*, the Hollywood-tragic tale of an actress's rise to fame while her drunken actor-husband and mentor skids into unemployment and a last noble suicide. It lay, of course, in the casting. There was sober James Mason giving another of the performances of his life as the side-lined alcoholic, Norman Maine, in what was in fact a come-back vehicle for the turbulently unreliable Judy Garland, whose suffering Esther Blodgett/Vicki Lester picked up odd and even touching resonances from her own chequered past. Cukor knew how to make the most of this, but it is only

now that we can nearly fully savour the extent of that most. Bowing presumably to the anxiety of exhibitors after its initial three-hour showings, Warners scissored out some 27 minutes, footage thought ever since to have been irrevocably lost. Thanks largely to the sleuthing and perseverance of Ron Haver of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and to key-collaborators, much of the lost has been found and what couldn't be has been artfully bridged by the editing-in of tinted stills with scraps of the original soundtrack over.

As well as a couple of musical numbers, 'Here's What I'm Here For' and the longer 'Lose That Long Face' (with its echoes of *Singin' in the Rain*), in themselves, by themselves a bonus for all Garland-fans, the replaced and reconstituted footage adds a crucial dramatic intensity to the Mason-Garland relationship, filling in a period of stoic disappointment for the singer – reduced to doing a shampoo commercial, etc. – before the location-bound actor can return and fulfil his promise about getting her into the studio, later adding a Pagliacci touch as a distraught Garland has to go back on set to complete the merry 'Long Face' sequence. Cukor used the new CinemaScope screen marvellously, notably in an opening, roaming backstage episode, and was superbly abetted – in terms of atmosphere – by the colour consultancy of Hoyningen-Huene, deepening and lightening the moods of this classic wallow in fantasy.

As for its being a showcase for the volatile, tremulous and belting talents of Garland, well, her smokingly torchy rendering of 'The Man That Got Away' and the sustained lunacy of 'Somewhere There's a Someone' – in which she recreates for moping Mason a typically mind-boggling studio song-and-dance routine all over their domestic furniture – are probably as fine as anything she ever did.

Which brings us to the second big irony. Looking at *A Star is Born* again, in this amplified accounting, one can see in all its howling obviousness exactly where the cut – if cuts there had to be – should have come: in the unwarrantably celebrated 'Born in a Trunk' extravaganza, a sort of redundant recap of young Gumm's career, which goes on and on. Lose it altogether, for the little it contributes in entertainment, the hiccupping halt it calls to larger proceedings. And the sick joke is that the whole sequence was directed by other hands: Cukor had nothing to do with it.

HARD TO BELIEVE that Alfred Hitchcock's quite masterly *Rear Window*, made in the same year, has been available only for clandestine viewing for so long. It's a tribute to the director at his most wickedly assured, and to the wittily edged screenplay drawn by John Michael Hayes from a Cornell Woolrich short story, that one should recall it so vividly.

This is the archetypal eavesdropping movie, with us all cast as voyeurs along with James Stewart, a rugged magazine photographer confined to a wheelchair by a broken leg and amusing himself by peering out of his Greenwich Village apartment window

into those of his neighbours giving on to an inner courtyard. A breathtaking piece of camera wizardry establishes Stewart's plight in a single expository movement, embracing the huge, enticing set before settling on the photographer's sweaty face. (A convenient heat wave helps to justify all those unguarded windows, or little lit stages for peepers.) The neighbours are fetchingly contrasted: a Miss Lonelyhearts chatting animatedly over a candle table to no one, a childless couple with a small pooch they lower in a basket to pee, honeymooners (whose blind's mostly down), a curvy blonde prancing around in her underwear, a fellow desperately trying to compose a song at his piano – and a husband (Raymond Burr) whom Stewart comes to suspect of having dissected his nagging, invalid wife.

Grace Kelly is beautifully deployed as Stewart's elegant, upmarket fiancée, gradually tugged in as binoculars and magnifying lenses focus on Burr's every movement across the courtyard, on the glowing tip of his cigarette, even and mostly evilly, in the dark. Wendell Corey plays a cop friend, who poohpoohs their fancies, and Thelma Ritter's urban cynicism as Stewart's visiting nurse lends pungency. Inevitably, the becalmed amateur hunter becomes the hunted. Hitchcock (who loved self-imposed restrictions) allows the camera only once to patrol outside Stewart's apartment, relishes the small dramas on the fringes of his main action, and juggles with *that* with exquisite timing. It is a film to welcome back; and to frequent again and again, central to his oeuvre.

The Barbican Cinema begins a short season, 'The Complete Jacques Tati' this Friday, mentioned here for two reasons. One is that the occasional moment or so of neighbourly interaction, hardly heard dialogue, in *Rear Window* bemusingly reminded me of Tati's way with marginal eccentrics. The other is implicit in the word 'complete': here is the little-seen *Parade*, a 70-minute curate's egg of an affair, made in 1974 for Swedish TV and I now find rather overpraised by me when caught at the London Film Festival the following year: a party-cum-circus-cum-vaudeville show, with Tati as ringmaster, some tremendously genial bits of business (Tati as both horse and rider, a few audience-observation gags), but infernally choppy and culminating in an overtly sentimental stare at two kids messing about. All those, however, concerned to complete the set of this erratic genius's works should give it a whirl, just as they should certainly look at the early (1947) short, *L'Ecole des Facteurs*, the delightful embryo of *Jour de Fête*. The 1967 short, *Cours du Soir*, made – as it were – in the wings of *Playtime*, is strictly for collectors: a misconceived re-casting of old material. Harsh words; and they come from a Tati-enthusiast. This has been a strange, fascinating, look-back week, after the contemporary rubbish of last. Next week, therefore, for reviews of Claude Goretta's highly recommended *The Death of Mario Ricci* (Academy Two, PG) and Christine Edzard's textured portrait of a Victorian nursemaid, *Biddy* (Minema, U). □

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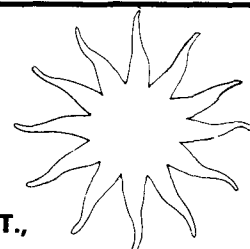
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THE DIORAMA is a secret building, unlike any other. Millions of Londoners who pass Park Terrace East on the corner of Regents Park and Euston Road may have noticed three large black doors in the centre of a row of Nash houses, but of those who know that these were once the entrance to Daguerre's Diorama few suspect that the shell of the original building is still standing behind.

Fewer still have any inkling that inside is a huge space with a ground plan like a great bird with outstretched wings. With few windows, it is a warren of back-stairs, corridors and rooms surrounding a glazed octagonal lightwell which rises through all three storeys. This courtyard has a special atmosphere which makes it a perfect auditorium for performances as diverse as Afro-Jazz and poetry readings.

The future of this remarkable edifice is in dispute. The landlords, the Crown Commissioners, and their developers, Greycoats Estates, propose converting it into offices. On 13 December they will appeal to the DoE against Camden Planning Committee's deci-

sion that it be retained for community, arts and public uses. The strategy of the present short-life tenants, Diorama Arts, and their professional advisers is specially interesting for, as well as contesting the appeal, they are submitting their own scheme to demonstrate an economically viable alternative which would preserve the character of the building. In the US this is called 'advocacy planning', where a community group employs expertise as sophisticated as that of property developers.

Why should the Diorama be preserved? It was purpose-built in 1823 to house a spectacular form of entertainment which is the direct ancestor of the cinema and was invented by Louis Daguerre, the pioneer of photography. Romantic scenery and buildings painted on huge translucent linen sheets were illuminated from behind, showing the changing light from dawn to sunset using an intricate system of coloured filters (accompanied by sound effects and music). The machinery was housed in the wings – two of them because there were two shows: the circular auditorium was rotated from one to the other. The Diorama went bust in 1851, and was converted first into a chapel and then in 1922 into a centre for rheumatic diseases, when the lightwell was constructed. It is the only Diorama building in the world to have survived, and is rarer by far than a Roman amphitheatre.

After the hospital moved out in 1972 the Crown granted annual leases to some dyslexia therapists who used music and drama; gradually the building filled with artists and therapy groups who paid small

rents (to cover the cost of the upkeep) to the collective which became Diorama Arts. Thanks to them the public has been made aware of the existence of the building.

THE PLANNING situation is complicated. Greycoats and the Crown wish to realise the redeveloped value of the whole two-acre site. 30,000 square feet of refurbished offices on Albany Street would yield a profit of about £4m. As offices the Diorama would add about £2m. Greycoats claim that the conversion costs of £1m make it too expensive for any other purpose. But first they must obtain a change of use.

Diorama Arts' surveyors Bernard Williams argue that costs should be scaled to what they can afford. Costs of £600,000 could be financed by doubling their present rents to £7 per square foot, if the Crown granted a peppercorn lease, which is all the building is worth with its present planning designation. Peter Eley, of architects Duffy, Eley, Giffone and Worthington (DEGW), has prepared a costed scheme showing the courtyard converted into a theatre-in-the-round, the original circular auditorium restored into a foyer entered through the main doors in Park Terrace, and unchanged room space.

The Crown would have a tenant and a refurbished building with fifty years' extra life and value. Greycoats would still make a substantial profit. Diorama Arts would flourish, and the public would have access to a unique building and a special type of arts centre.

One problem is that Diorama Arts is a loose-knit group which has grown to fill the cheap space of a building temporarily out of use. To satisfy the requirements of such a site and the Crown landlords they have had to define their objective as providing an *institute for art and therapy*. In this they have been assisted by Urbed (Urban and Economic Development Ltd.), specialist consultants in the economic regeneration of run-down areas who match old buildings with small businesses and community groups.

THE INQUIRY therefore has a significance far beyond the conservation of a historic building. DEGW regard a building as a space whose use, like that of a family home, is being continuously adapted and changed from the day it is completed, not as a fixed structure with a fixed purpose. In this interpretation buildings are an economic and social resource, and the architect and others must address the problem of bringing them back into creative social production when they fall into disuse. Clients therefore require a wide range of services – economic, managerial, legal and political in addition to architectural design.

Correspondingly, more architects might follow the example of advising clients that their requirements can be satisfied by re-planning their existing space. Unfortunately most architects are not trained for such an approach, and their fee-scale makes it in their interest to vandalise our cities through demolition and rebuilding. □

The view from the ground: looking up the Diorama's lightwell



Richard Wate

THEATRE

Joyce McMillan

Foreign policy

Burke & Hare
RICHARD CRANE *Glasgow Theatre Club*
True West
SAM SHEPARD *Glasgow Theatre Club*
Maggie's Man
COLIN MORTIMER 7:84 *Scotland on Tour*

'Alas poor country, almost afraid to know itself . . . ' Trust Shakespeare, cunning Englishman that he was, to sum up the Scottish dilemma in half-a-dozen well chosen words. After centuries of insidious cultural colonisation, we Scots have a tough time forming any respectable self-image at all, and Scottish theatre – like every other area of Scottish cultural life – tends to be obsessed with questions of national identity.

This is the socio-cultural quagmire – the morass of insecurities and resentments, snobberies and inverted snobberies – that English directors have to negotiate when they first come to work in Scotland. Faynia Williams of Brighton Theatre – appointed this summer as the first Artistic Director of Glasgow's splendid new Theatre Club at the Tron – has been no exception. On her arrival, she announced – to sceptical grunts from Scotland's vocal if impecunious playwrights' lobby – that she intended to work closely with Glasgow writers and to present plenty of new plays with a 'strong Tron flavour' (the Tron is, indeed, a characterful building, a converted Robert Adam church with a delightful café/bar attached). She then made the supremely tactless move of presenting, as the first production of her opening season, a new play by her husband Richard Crane (jointly appointed with her as the Tron's Literary Adviser) about the famous Edinburgh body-snatchers, Burke and Hare; and she announced that she would be following up with the Scottish première of Sam Shepard's *True West*, directed by Paul Joyce (from London) and featuring two American actors.

The groans and I-told-you-sos from the 'Scottish lobby' were predictable enough. But, in a sense, these needn't matter too much to the incoming director, provided the actual productions are making real contact with genuine Scottish audiences.

Unfortunately, neither **Burke and Hare** nor **True West** has been a production of that decisive, unassailable quality. *Burke and Hare* was a new play, all right; tightly directed, well enough acted by a strong company headed by Derek Lord and Jeni Giffen and superbly designed by Hildegard Bechtler to take advantage of the bleak, soaring spaces of the Tron's half-finished auditorium; the programme notes drew hefty parallels between the plight of contemporary Britain and the miserable condition of immigrant Irish workers in 18th-century

Edinburgh. But these chunks of socio-economic theory failed to connect with the lightweight black pantomime Crane had made of the basic Burke and Hare story.

Under the circumstances, *True West* was perhaps a rather unfortunate choice as a follow-up production. It's undoubtedly a well made, impressive play, strong, tense and much admired in its New York and London productions over the past three years; and this version at the Tron benefits from a couple of fine performances from Michael Fitzpatrick as Austin, the clean-cut and ambitious young Californian writer, and from Harry Ditson as his grating misfit of a brother. But *True West* is intensely American – even Californian – in its preoccupations, and for all its technical excellence I think it lacks the emotional depth and subtlety to transcend that particular cultural situation. What's more, the precise, sealed-off, naturalistic presentation on which the text insists offers nothing to draw the audience into the action unless they find themselves personally touched by the specific conflict it presents. Once again, I had a sense that the Tron audience had somehow been left out of the equation; they looked impressed by the standard of what they had seen, but also excluded from it.

Making contact with Scottish audiences has never been a problem for John McGrath's 7:84 Scotland company. Their folksy, presentational performance style, liberally laced with music and jokes, has always been an efficient attention-grabber, and their latest small-scale touring production **Maggie's Man** – a sprightly little comedy loosely based on *The Government Inspector* – has enough energetic performances and decent one-liners to keep the audience amused. The really depressing thing about 7:84 is how little they choose to do with the audience's attention once they've got it; instead of taking hold of a few assumptions and giving them a vigorous and radical shake, they seem quite content with the job of confirming the routine prejudices of Scotland's Labour Party and Trade Union Establishment. *Maggie's Man* is a crude, cheerful little satire set in a mythical Scottish borough where the local Tories – hands well into the public expenditure till – are thrown into confusion by the arrival of what they think is a Special Adviser from Number Ten come to check their monetarist credentials; it begins and ends, and indeed proceeds throughout, on the assumption that Thatcherism is a silly, amoral and contradictory creed.

For those of us who are already convinced that Thatcherism is, indeed, silly, amoral and contradictory, it's all good, harmless fun, if rather crudely done; but it could no more politicise an apathetic youngster or convert a Tory than it could persuade Ronald Reagan to join the Socialist International. It may be true that seven per cent of the population own 84 per cent of the wealth; it's also true that less than 30 per cent of the people voted Labour at the last election, and it's high time 7:84 turned their attention to the hearts and minds of those working-class people who don't think Mrs Thatcher is silly at all. □

TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Drone track

WHAT DO you look like when you're watching TV? You probably look like you've just been bumped off by Bernard Hill in repeats of **Fox** (C4), your neck flopped over to one side, like mine, and your legs splayed out. You should rig up a cheval glass over the set, then maybe you'd learn to sit up straight and not look so un-together when Denis Norden asks 'Why can't life be more like Hironelle?', or 'Mad Lizzie' orders you to get out of bed and touch your toes on TV-am when you've only just started dreaming about getting into bed with **Miss Israel** (ITV).

Tennyson's idea of luxury was to sit in a hot bath reading about small birds. Ours is to sit in front of a radioactive box watching stories of washing-up fluid and pet food, their high spots edited together like cubist paintings to bring a kind of hybrid vitality into our mis-named living rooms.

Why do we look forward to telly so much of an evening, or why do I? I think it's because I used to look forward to the cinema so much as a child and can't get used to the fact that television isn't entertainment any more, but part of the background, a drone track that has to be either 'on' or 'off', like a person with only two moods, both strangely unsatisfying.

I suppose we are the last generation to have been entertained. After us, only the lack of it will be noticeable, as with oxygen. When every known diversion is piped into the home like running water, only its forcible removal will provide the kind of change that lifts the heart, as in a camping holiday, gaol sentence or divorce case. If they introduced TV licence endorsements for minor crimes it might help the over-crowding in our prisons.

It is programmes of purest 'entertainment' that seem to question their own status most openly and, occasionally, hilariously. Laughter is a strangely abstract substance in programmes like **Game for a Laugh** (ITV), to be treated with immense respect like the female orgasm on American therapy shows. For instance, in case we are all frigid tonight, here is something that will make us positively *explode* with displacement activity. Imagine, if you will, a new version of golf. Ah, but played on *water*! What about that? The funniest part is when a sports reporter gets the ball in his cup of 'tee', although I may be seeing a pun here where none was intended. The whole thing had me peeing myself with a kind of painful anti-laughter, mainly at the idea of it being on television.

Other wheezes included talking chocolates, cannibalistic custard and a woman being set in concrete (it's really a stuntman)

while her husband and daughter look on with expressions of embarrassment and shame, imagining it to be her. My favourite was the mock religious discussion before an invited audience of real-life Christians, with acrobats dressed as clerics. The trouble was, the introducer took ten minutes killing himself at the thought of it, leaving only three for the actual mini programme, called 'Witness', to get off the ground, be funny, then deteriorate into rather tame acrobatic fisticuffs. The audience, who were thin on the ground, even when bunched together, looked more relieved than amused when the miracle was revealed unto them. Affable Jeremy Beadle popped through a broken window with the glad tidings that they were all part of a massive blasphemy called *Game for a Laugh*, but no one seemed to know what he was talking about. Finally, contracts were fulfilled: Ladies and Gentlemen, the fabulous Dingbats!

If cable happens, I'd pay to see a grown-up version of *Game for a Laugh* in which well-known personalities fell for real-life put-ons involving the seamy side of their lives; a kind of *This is Your Life in Ruins*, which they had to try and talk their way out of, as in politics.

I wonder what it feels like to be Auberon Waugh. Pretty nice to judge from his expression on *After Midnight* (ITV). But he didn't look so sleek after being outgabbled and outdressed by Peter Tatchell inside the distance. The following week Waugh was paid to be rude to little Julien Temple, a Jagger protégé who 'directed' their 'banned' video and had his foot up on the desk to make some point or other. Unfortunately, Waugh had difficulty being rude to the affected youth due to a mutual wall of pomposity which neither dared scale. It was left to Hunter Davies to assure the obtuse boy that Tony Palmer was making awfully darling promo films using clips from Vietnam and Hiroshima 'way back in the Sixties'. Temple took his foot down after that. Having seen his video, I think I'll use Richard Attenborough for my next one. No I won't.

The show fell rather flat after the appearance of Peter Cook, who is now the only person besides Tommy Cooper who is innately interesting on television. On the subject of sex, Cook said he didn't believe it had ever taken place. He personally had never had it, had anyone else? Had Hunter Davies, for example? Davies looked unsure, and the subject had to be changed by Janet Street Porter, who asked Cook if he had ever met Harold Wilson. Cook said he couldn't remember. It wasn't the sort of thing one remembered, was it?

In the absence of Master Waugh, juvenile blimpiness was taken care of last week by an old man of 18 called Harry Phibbs, who made a pun about the green and common women, who he said were lesbians with 'very nasty habits'. Did he think the government should legislate against homosexuals then? Clearly 'legislate' was a hopelessly inadequate description of what Harry wanted the government to do to them, but he couldn't control his speech. Janet held him to an apoplectic splutter. The show has 'it', no doubt about it. □

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2799

Set by Pat Blackford

Extracts, please, from a pantomime suitable for performance by one of the following groups: the Booker judges and shortlisted authors; Tory MPs; staff at the Comp Complex. Up to 150 words, by 16 December.

No 2796

Set by E. O. Parrott

Updated travels.

Report

By Frank Shortstraw

No room for me; little for you. Shame. A tenner apiece.

Patrick Leigh Fermor in Bootle

'What's yours, John?' The barman at The Swinging Sporan in the New Strand Shopping Centre suddenly reminds me of Giorgios, owner of the little taverna at Areopolis where I once played backgammon with the crafty old Maniots, long into the night. That was twenty years ago but I see him before me now with the same drooping moustache and bored expression as this Bootle barman. The pub is crowded with unemployed people, the young with startling pink hair, the old in denims and donkey jackets gazing disconsolately into their pints of McEwans. I am reminded of some ghoulis mediaeval wall painting of the Day of Doom. Thirty years ago on a noisy ferry from Piraeus crowded with sleepy travellers, priests, gypsies, and small traders from Athens I saw faces like these. The faces of the lost and displaced, wandering in an aimless flux . . . 'Listen, mate, are youz 'avin' a drink or aren't yer? This is an alehouse not a bloody bus shelter.' Thus the raw vernacular poetry of these windswept streets catches the ear like the far-off tolling of bells at some wayside monastery high in the Khasian mountains.

NICHOLAS MURRAY

Dr Johnson in Scotland

At John o' Groats we found we could go no further, whereupon Dr Johnson remarked that only a country like Scotland could *peter out thus*. I laughed heartily at this pleasantry, as did our new-found colonial companion, Mr Theroux, who regretfully took his leave, to continue his circumvention of these islands. The doctor, notwithstanding that he had been much taken with the gentleman's tinted spectacles and digital watch, commented that since an Englishman would not wish to, and a Scotsman would scarcely know how to, it took an American with a Frenchified name to attempt this singularly fruitless enterprise. A strangely-attired pedestrian, a Mr Savile, then approached our party, asking directions to Land's End and requesting a charitable donation. 'Sir,' quoth Dr Johnson, 'since charity begins at home, I beg you to reconsider your itinerary, for the Cornish pastie is a foodstuff to be avoided above all things.'

PETER NORMAN

Borrow visits Benidorm

I arrived at this sandy resort, thinking at first to have encountered some Cockney or Brummagen kingdom on the Mediterranean strand. Of the Spanish tongue, I heard no syllable.

Perplexed, I approached a heavy fellow sporting but the meagrest breeches and a scarlet vest emblazoned in white, 'Olé! Don Juan Lives On!' To my enquiry, he answered, 'The local daogoes, squire? They pig it, way back. I'll take you.'

On our journey together, my kindly guide

asked me my purpose. 'Flogging Scriptures?' he remarked dubiously. 'Those I ain't seen in years. You're not kidding, sport?' Silently thanking the Almighty for this opportunity, I displayed one of my holy freight to my companion. After eyeing me cunningly, he, to my utter amazement, commenced ripping the Testament apart. I cried out with indignation. But, 'Can it, squire,' the fellow adjured coolly, 'I dig the old red-hot video, too . . .'

JOHN DIGBY

FIRST PERSON



Jeremy
Lewis
**Gnome
sweet
home**

MOST OF US keep, in reserve, the ultimate deterrent in pejoratives – to be unleashed on the big occasion only, when the final anathema is to be pronounced, friendships blighted for ever and a last stand taken against the powers of wickedness and night. In our family, this not very secret adjectival weapon took the form of the word 'suburban', occasionally preceded by 'utterly', when extra emphasis was required.

To describe a house or its furnishings, a hairstyle or (by definition) a trouser-suit, a lampshade or an Old Chigwellian tie as 'suburban' was a sign that its owner was almost certainly beyond redemption, doomed to a hell of dralon three-piece suites, ruched lace curtains, cake stands, carriage lamps, bottle-end windows and strangulated voices saying 'pardon' in the lounge. 'Loathsome', 'vulgar' and 'vile' were as nothing besides this oral mark of Cain; only 'common' – that most brutal of middle-class epithets – offered any competition, and even that had a rugged, jovial ring to it that saved it from plumbing the lowest depths of moral and aesthetic turpitude.

For as long as I can remember, the suburbs and those who inhabit them have been the subject of derision and disapproval, scorned and unloved with equal fervour by snobs and socialists alike. Hovering uneasily between the city and the countryside, suburbanites (who must comprise well over 50 per cent of the population, with anxious applicants queueing up for membership) are spurned and ridiculed by the inhabitants of both. Who but a clerk of the dimmest, most soulless kind would *choose* to live in Purley or Petts Wood – lifeless, unsociable, petty-minded, smug and hypocritical places, lacking the dash of Chelsea or Campden Hill or the working-class vitality of Hackney or West Ham, offering up in handkerchief-sized back gardens a pale, pathetic echo of the fields and meadows that lie beyond the endless lines of identical houses?

Those who consider themselves a cut or two above the suburbs (excluding, of course, North Oxford and some inner Lon-

don varieties) love to deride the pretensions and the vulgarities of suburbia with a ferocious relish and indignation: clip-on Tudor beams, two-tone chiming front-door bells and fur-covered lavatory seats all form an integral part of the unkind but fiercely funny English comedy of manners, visual equivalents of the Veneerings or Mr Pooter or those pompous City tradesmen, so savagely mocked by Surtees, who papered the walls of their newly acquired country houses with bogus family portraits bought in bulk.

Nor have suburbanites fared any better from the men of the Left, despite some eager advocacy from the sandals-and-vegetarianism set in the early years of the century. The suburbs are abominated as reactionary hotbeds, peopled by hard-faced self-made men, double-glazing salesmen or DIY magnates who have scuttled to safety and want to knock away the ladder behind them, each one of them a rabid hanger-and-flogger, with a 'blue-rinsed' wife of the kind beloved of political correspondents.

Both Right and Left are united in their particular dislike and suspicion of the lower-middle-class variety of suburbanite man, who is thought to be politically unreliable, short on 'compassion' and the attributes of the 'caring' society: an unkind and snooty slander of a section of society which, like any other, contains good eggs as well as bad, and produced such fine upstanding men as Dickens and H.G. Wells.

Although I spent a good deal of my youth mocking the houses on the Kingston bypass, and struggle still to contain my laughter as we trundle slowly through Cheam or the tropics of Ruislip, I have lived in suburbia for a good many years now, and I love every minute of it. I suspect that the animals, wise folk that they are, have a better appreciation of suburban life than censorious human beings muttering about alienation and anomie: the streets and gardens in my part of south-west London are crammed almost to bursting point with cheerful suburban foxes, hedgehogs,

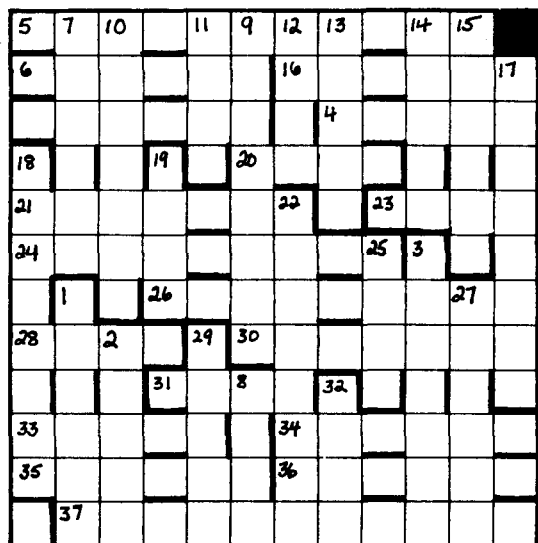
badgers, even lizards, expelled from the countryside by pesticides and agri-business and swiftly adapting to a new life among the commuters and the garden gnomes. Nor have they left a paradise behind: every time I go into the countryside — de-hedged, wired-up, littered with the ghosts of ancient elms — I am filled with the kind of melancholy indignation the suburbs evoke in others, and wonder whether it wouldn't be better to stay at home and remember it as it was, or ought to be.

For the suburbs, unlike the mechanised, empty countryside, or the tatty, decaying inner cities, have — by their very natures — a sense of expectation, embodying in brick and mortar an old truism about its being better to travel hopefully than to arrive: in one direction lies the promise of the city, in another the wide open spaces, and in between is a way of life that is agreeable, spacious, sociable and mild. I continue to use 'suburban' as a pejorative; deep down, it's a song of praise. □

Salamanca 75

'Black & White'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 75, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 3 January 1984*.



The unclued answers (one of two words) whose numbers are necessarily displaced refer to the unnumbered answer. All words are in Chambers.

Name _____

Address _____

*Note: Salamanca will appear next in our Christmas double issue (16/23 December), but the solution to S75 will be published with Salamanca 77 on 6 January 1984.

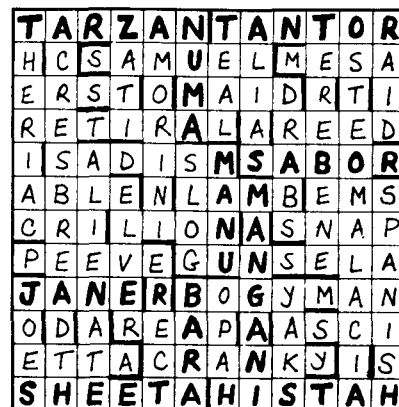
ACROSS

- 16 Stone design — you'll find it's current in imitation mostly (6)
- 20 Jock's woe long in proper circumstances (4)
- 21 Writings and paintings etc, seen in well turned out revue perhaps (7)
- 23 Fare people find acceptable (4)
- 24 Is mostly receiving this special training? (9)
- 26 This part of lathe had, in short, tireless motion (9)
- 28 Monument for cat that's black? (4)
- 30 Something added in complexion's showing how in love he was? (7)
- 31 These characters are no longer employed — morals have dropped I see! (4)
- 33 Late letter to King that's always in order (5)
- 34 I absorb energy in plain discourse (6)
- 35 By implication some drama's far-fetched (2 words, 6)
- 36 Round an area in Spain it grows (6)
- 37 Fellow in work with e.g. covering long carriages etc. in some places? (11)

DOWN

- 10 'Ard tugs perhaps needed for making certain types of wallpaper (7)
- 11 I'm avoiding obstruction on the green taking a disused path (4)
- 12 Large runner in uproar, note, breaking away (4)
- 13 In an excellent and impressive manner thus the way the lowly live becomes what the 'high' have? (5)
- 14 No longer closer to sin one's elevated (5)
- 15 Gypsy again found roving round centre of plateau (6)
- 17 Chapel for the masses? (Creak when a ghost enters) (8)
- 18 His to work on call mostly with lift? (8)
- 19 Some of them have short wings (4)
- 22 Directions to method of incidental doings (8)
- 25 What may be seen accompanying him (tar) when the mariner's at sea? (4)
- 27 In Scotland this swimmer has leg adapted (6)
- 29 Graver hand type (5)
- 32 This often reaches rare heights? (4)

Solution to Salamanca 74



Answers translated into the language of the great apes used by Tarzan (Edgar Rice Burroughs) are, in order across then down, elephant, lioness, leopard, snake, lion, monkey, ape, deer.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 74

Mike Adams (Winchester)
John C. Brash (Edinburgh)
Roger Hooper (London SW19)

Solution to 1421



Prizewinners to 1421

Mrs A. S. Jones (Wrexham)
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GLC

Working for London

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The Majority Party Secretariat provides day-to-day secretarial, administrative and policy assistance to Members, Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs and Backbenchers of the Labour Administration.

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The GLC is an equal opportunities employer

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Application forms obtainable from the **Senior Personnel Officer, Directorate of Management Services, 18 Brixton Hill, SW2**. Tel: **01-274 7722**. Ext. **3008**. Closing date: **16 December 1983**.

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LAMBETH

APPOINTMENTS

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APPOINTMENTS

A.L.A.

ASSOCIATION OF LONDON AUTHORITIES
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This Association comprises 11 of the 32 London Boroughs and also the Greater London Council and ILEA. It was formed in July to enable the member authorities to work more effectively together for the people they serve.

In particular the Association is committed to the promotion of local democracy and accountability. It expects to be consulted by the Government on proposals affecting local governments in London. In any case it is making representations and seeking negotiations with the Government on issues of paramount importance to the people of London.

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The London Borough of Brent are acting as recruitment agents for the Association and as such application forms and job descriptions are obtainable from the Personnel Division, Room 1, Brent Town Hall Annexe, Kings Drive, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9BR, returnable by 16 December, 1983.

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MAPAM CONFERENCE Sat. 3 Dec. 8 p.m., Yakar, 2 Egerton Gardens, London NW4. Doug Hoyle MP and Elazar Granot MP. Sun. 4 Dec. 8 p.m., 37 Broadhurst Gardens, Elazar Granot 'Crisis in Israeli Society'. Public sessions from 2 p.m.-5 p.m. More details see 'Listings' or tel: 01-328 2554.

'MARX AND PHILOSOPHY': Socialist Society debate with Ted Benton and Sean Sayers on 7 December, University of London Union, at 7.30 p.m. Details: 9 Poland St, London W1. 01-734 8501.

SOLIDARNOSC. Rally for Peace, Justice and Freedom in Poland. 3 p.m. Sunday 11 December, Hammersmith Town Hall, King St, London W6. Organised by Polish Solidarity Campaign and the Solidarnosc Information Office in UK. Tel: 01-837 9464.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public talk Sunday, 4 Dec., 8 p.m. 'The Power of Thought'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

THURSDAY 8 December: NEWHAM. SAVE OUR HEALTH SERVICE. Public Rally/Meeting. Speakers: Michael Meacher MP, Tony Benn, Andrea Campbell and Harry Packham (COHSE). 7.30 p.m. East Ham Town Hall, Barking Road E6. Info: 01-470 0733.

APPEALS

POST-GRADUATE student with writer's block needs help in preparing thesis. Fee by negotiation. Box 7095.

LISTINGS

THURS 1 DECEMBER

CAMBERWELL Health Emergency Campaign to fight NHS cuts locally: Public launch meeting. Spkrs Harriet Harman, MP, Roger Poole (NUPE), Adrian Spellar (CHC), Dick Taverner. 7.30pm United Reform Church, Grove La, SE5. Transport, creche. Details: **SCVS 01-732 9777/6.** **Camberwell Health Emergency Campaign, Flat 4, 9 Elmwood Rd, Herne Hill, SE24 9NU.**

FRI 2 DECEMBER

LONDON 'Release Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South African jails' 24-hour picket of South Africa House, Trafalgar Square from 5.30pm. Details: **01-837 6050.**

LONDON 'Strategies for fighting racism' Workshop with Umesh Desai, Ace Kelly, James Ngugi, Mark Wadsworth. 1-3pm A45 LSE Students Union, Houghton St, WC2.

SAT 3 DECEMBER

LONDON Leonie Caldecott and Stephanie Leland, editors 'Reclaim the Earth', signing session 12.30-2pm Commonwealth Inst, Kensington High St, W8. The Women's Press at Soma Books. 01-603 4535.

LONDON 'Greenham Wirecutters Benefit' with Poison Girls, Rubella Ballet, Omega Tribe, Dornmann. Adm £2.50 The Ace, Brixton Hill. Details: **Martin Goldschmidt, 01-582 5088.**

LONDON 'British Labour, Zionism, Israel and Peace' MAPAM Conf. with Doug Hoyle, MP, Elazar Granot, Knesset member. 8pm 'Yakar', 2 Egerton Gdns, NW4. Details: **01-328 2554.**

WELLS Centenary Celebration of birth of Arthur Cook, Sec of Miners' Federation in General Strike 1926. 10am-4pm Blue School, Wells, Somerset. Spkrs incl Arthur Scargill, Dennis Skinner MP. Details: **David Parker, Bristol 841884/833814** eves.

BIRMINGHAM 'Women and Low Pay' Conf 10-4 University of Aston. Women only, creche, wheelchair access. Details: **Tricia Davis, TURC 021-236 6323.**

LONDON 'Women and Unemployment' Conf for unemployed women and women workers in the South-east. 9.30am-4pm Congress House, Gt Russell St, W1. Workshops, creche. Details: **Celia Minnough, Guildford Unemployed Peoples Centre, Old Police Stn, 3a Leopold Rd, Guildford, Surrey, 0483 33942.**

LONDON 'Appropriate Health Care' - a Third World First day school 9.30am-5pm Bloomsbury Theatre, Euston Sq, WC1. Fee £1.50. Lunch, creche. Details: **Judith Ibsen, 01-986 1275.**

LONDON 'Women in Politics' Central London 300 Group Conf, Spkrs incl Tespa Blackstone, Richard Balfie MEP. Lunch. £3.50/£1 unwaged. YWCA, 16/22 Gt Russell St, WC1. Details: **01-858 2076.**

LONDON 'The State and Epidemics in Africa' day conf 10-5pm Inst of Commonwealth Studies, 27-28 Russell Sq, WC1. Fee £5. Papers on comparative approaches: the Congo, German colonies, South Africa. Details: **Deborah Gaitskell 01-444 9024. Org African Studies Assoc. UK, 18 Northumberland Ave, WC2, 01-930 1662.**

SUN 4 DECEMBER

LONDON 'An Evening for El Salvador' Julie Christie, The Flying Pickets, Yolocamba I-TA. 7.30pm Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank. Tickets £4/£6 from Box Office or Org. El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 29 Islington Park St, N1. 01-359 3976/2270.

LONDON 'Tribute to W. H. Auden' by US poet Joseph Brodsky. 3pm Riverside Studios, Crisp Rd, W6. Adm free. 3pm.

MON 5 DECEMBER

BOW ST Picket Magistrates Court 10am. Trafalgar 9 Defence Campaign. C/o 22 Brownlow Mews, WC1N 2LA.

MUSWELL HILL 'Is Your Doctor Bomb-proof?' - Medical consequences of Nuclear war, Dr Ivor Robinson (MCANW). Slides, adm. free. 8pm Tetherdown Hall, Tetherdown, N10. CND Muswell Hill Peace Week. Details: **J. Morley, 01-889 0571.**

TUES 6 DECEMBER

BRIXTON Meeting to form a S. London Labour Comm. on Ireland. 8pm Room 31, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton. Details: **J. L. Woolrich, 01-737 1968** eves.

WANDSWORTH 'Drug use in the 80s - response of the Community Drug Project on problem drug takers'. Discn 7.30pm Penfold Centre, 1 Neville Gill Close (rear Arndale Centre), SW18. Adm free, tea/coffee, collection. Org **WAMH, 3 Brodric Rd, SW17.**

WED 7 DECEMBER

LONDON 'The Cause of Ireland' - British premiere 7.30pm Brixton Ritz, Coldharbour Lane, SW2.

WARWICK 'Nuclear Weapons and International Law' Lecture 7.30pm Arts Centre Conference Room, University of Warwick. Adm. free. Details: **John Dewar, 0203-24011 x 2119.**

LONDON 'Critical Issues in Health & Race' 3-day conf 9.30am daily Holborn Library Hall, 32-38 Theobalds Rd, WC1. Adm. £10, £8, £5, £1, 50p. Details: **Community Health Grp for the Ethnic Minorities, 28 Churchfield Rd, W3. 01-993 6119.**

BARNET Inaugural Meeting of Barnet Fabian Society. 7.30pm 7 Sunningfield Rd, Hendon, NW4. Spkr Peter Archer MP. Details: **David Beere, 178 Colin Gardens, NW9. 01-205 3462.**

THURS 8 DECEMBER

LONDON 'Liberty: The Challenge of 1984' Cobden Trust Human Rights Day Lecture 1983 by The Rev. Lord Soper. 6.30pm 10 St James's Sq, W1. Entrance Free. The Cobden Trust, 21 Tard-bur St, SE1 4LA. 01-402 3888.

NEWHAM 'Save our Health Service' Public Meeting/Rally. Spkrs Michael Meacher MP, Tony Benn, Harry Packham (COHSE). 7.30pm East Ham Town Hall, Barking Rd, E6. Details: **01-470 0733.**

LONDON 'Education Policy and the Media'. Seminar and discn. led by Peter Wilby, Ed. corres. *Sunday Times*. 5.30-7pm Room 3B18, King's College, Strand, WC2. Org **Politics, Education and Society Seminar Grp. C/o 01-636 5454 x 2325.**

FRI 9 DECEMBER

LONDON 'The Future of Gay Rights' Spkr Peter Tatchell 7.30pm Library Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Org **Gay Humanist Group, 54 Spring La, Kenilworth, Warwicks. 0326 58458.**

FORTHCOMING

10 DEC ST ALBANS Solemn Procession to designated Mass Burial Ground to mark arrival of cruise missiles. Assemble 1pm St Peters Church War Memorial, St Peters St. Details: **Daphne Partridge, S. Midlands Region CND, St. Albans 73958.**

10 DEC PORTSMOUTH CND March & Rally. Assemble 11.30am Mountbatten Memorial Alexandra Park. Spkrs incl Hilary Winwright, Gunther Minnerup (END). March to Mountbatten Gallery. Org **Portsmouth CND 0705 826605.**

10 DEC MUSWELL HILL Study day 2pm-5pm. Workshops on unilateralism, civil defence, the Russian threat. Adm free. Tetherdown Hall, Tetherdown, N10. Details: **Muswell Hill CND P. Hawkes 01-883 5006.**

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad. under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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MALE, 34, slim, tall, divorced, London area, varied interests, seeks a slimish, genuine, affectionate socialist female, 18-35, for love, friendship and marriage. Box 7120.

NIGERIAN MALE, 34, 5ft 9in, socialist, black, handsome, but presently unemployed, seeks charming lady, view friendship/marriage. London. Comfortable flat. Box 7051.

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RATHER UNCONVENTIONAL, well-worn woman, would like a hassle-free relationship with a male person. No 'Real Men' please. Northumberland/Durham. Box 7085.

RETIRED ACADEMIC, Labour historian, widower, vigorous 70, North London, invites retired lady liking books, travel, to share happy, easy-going close companionship. Box 7130.

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